THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE PHENOMENON OF SPEECHLESSNESS IN THE POETRY OF MARIE LUISE KASCHNITZ, GÜNTER EICH, NELLY SACHS AND PAUL CELAN

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE PHENOMENON OF SPEECHLESSNESS IN THE POETRY OF MARIE LUISE KASCHNITZ, GÜNTER EICH, NELLY SACHS AND PAUL CELAN submitted by ROBERT FOOT in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

It is a widely recognised phenomenon that many post-war German poets have to a varying extent experienced great difficulties in furthering their poetological aims. They have become sceptical as to the very nature and function of poetry and, as a result, their work tends to evince an attitude of defeat, often signalled by the fragmented character of their language to the point of disintegration, or by the direct utterance of the desire to renounce the writing of poetry. When this situation arises in the work of a particular poet, then it is said to exist on the verge of speechlessness.

This study examines the phenomenon of speechlessness in the poetry of four prominent contemporary German lyric poets, Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Günter Eich, Nelly Sachs and Paul Celan, in order to define its basic causes and the effects it had on their work. The first chapter offers a comprehensive survey of how literary critics have dealt with this problem with respect to the modern period as a whole and the four poets under discussion. In ensuing chapters the incidence of speechlessness in the works of each individual poet is traced and analysed. The phenomenon is not examined in isolation but within the context of the artistic development of each author and in the light of the poetological theories and goals which underlie their poetry. It is shown that

despite the outward differences in the formal characteristics and intent in the poetry of Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan, their work nevertheless encounters similar problems. They all came to discover that the poetic word was an inadequate instrument for the portrayal of the chaotic nature of contemporary reality with its degenerate excesses, a fact which, in turn, exposed their poetry to the dangers of speechlessness.

In order to counteract the feeling of artistic impotence when faced with empirical social and political reality, the four poets then tended at one stage of their development or another to turn away from it and, instead, to concentrate upon the poetic exploration of more mystical or metaphysical aspects of existence, a domain where, in sharp contrast to the imperfections and impermanence of the mundane world, it was thought that more absolute manifestations of truth could be uncovered. This ontological endeavour was also not destined for success, however, because each poet became acutely aware of the fact that the human faculties of perception and language itself are not equal to the task of envisaging hitherto unknown areas of cognition or of articulating any insights that might be gained into them. Thus the poetry of these four authors is faced with disintegration into speechlessness before whichever aspect of reality it is confronted with.

In the final chapter it is then pointed out that, although the poetry of Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan is in many respects the product of the post-war era, the dilemma in which it finds itself is representative of a wider crisis discernible in modern literature as a whole.

Man frage nicht, was all die Zeit ich machte.
Ich bleibe stumm;
und sage nicht, warum.
Und Stille gibt es, da die Erde krachte.
Kein Wort, das traf;
man spricht nur aus dem Schlaf.
Und träumt von einer Sonne, welche lachte.
Es geht vorbei;
nachher war's einerlei.
Das Wort entschlief, als jene Welt erwachte.

(Karl Kraus, "Letztes Gedicht")

Wir haben nie, nicht einen einzigen Tag,
den reinen Raum vor uns, in den die Blumen
unendlich aufgehn. Immer ist es Welt
und niemals Nirgends ohne Nicht: das Reine,
Unüberwachte, das man atmet und
unendlich *weiß* und nicht begehrt. Als Kind
verliert sich eins im Stilln an dies und wird
gerüttelt. Oder jener stirbt und *ists*.
Denn nah am Tod sieht man den Tod *nicht* mehr
und starrt *hinaus*, vielleicht mit großem Tierblick.
Liebende, wäre nicht der andre, der
die Sicht verstellt, sind nah daran und staunen . . .
Wie aus Versehn ist ihnen aufgetan
hinter dem andern . . . Aber über ihn
kommt keiner fort, und wieder wird ihm Welt.
Der Schöpfung immer zugewendet, sehn
wir nur auf ihr die Spiegelung des Frein,
von uns verdunkelt. Oder daß ein Tier,
ein stummes, aufschaut, ruhig durch uns durch.
Dieses heißt Schicksal: gegenüber sein
und nichts als das und immer gegenüber.

(R.M. Rilke, "Die achte Elegie")

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The idea that twentieth century poetry has, in varying measure, been undergoing a crisis of expression and that its very existence has been put into question, has been widely put forward by a variety of critics and poets. They are of the belief that modern poetry seems to be unable to fulfil those aims for which it is intended, and so, instead of pursuing them, it evinces an attitude of self-defeat which can, in the most extreme cases, even lead to the actual renunciation of all poetic endeavour. When this poetological scepticism and the attendant possibility of total artistic capitulation is documented by a particular poet, then his work is said to exist on the verge of "speechlessness" or "Verstummen," or actually to have succumbed to it.

Before examining this phenomenon in the works of four post-war German poets, it will be useful to mention some of the more important poets who have found themselves faced with speechlessness as defined above and the reaction of critics to this literary problem.

The first and perhaps the most dramatic example in the twentieth century of a major poet's decision to renounce the writing of poetry, to fall silent purposely, was Hugo von Hofmannsthal. In "Ein Brief" (1902) he puts forth his reasons for not wishing to continue with the writing of lyric poetry and thereafter ceased his lyrical production. Rilke's poetry, as J.W. Storck makes clear,[1] was also severely tested by the threat of speechlessness. Indeed, the poet did, after the completion of Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge (1910) fall silent as far as the reading public was concerned, finally producing the Duineser Elegien and the Sonette an Orpheus during a brief but extremely intense outburst of creativity in February 1922. Stefan George's poetry also underwent a crisis of articulation, signalled, as Curt Hohoff points out, by "der mühsame gequälte Ton, die Mattheit so mancher Gedichte,"[2] and on a different level, Karl Kraus wrote a "Letztes Gedicht" (1933), and then refused to publish any more lyric poetry.

It is in the post-war German lyric, however, that the phenomenon of speechlessness, or at least the constant threat thereof, becomes most widely spread. Indeed, even from a cursory glance through the secondary literature on the subject, one could easily gain the impression that this aspect of the development of the contemporary lyric has reached epidemic proportions.[3]

Already in the Fifties Paul Böckmann pointed out that "das echte dichterische Wort" seemed to have become an endangered species,[4] and Walter Höllerer maintained that contemporary poetry had the tendency to consist of isolated fragments in which "das Verklingen der Sprache steht mehr im Mittelpunkt als das Lautwerden."[5] R.N. Maier asserted that many modern poems evince "eine fatale Leere," and that their imagery often consists of "peinlicher Substanzlosigkeit." He dramatically stated, "unsere Zeit erlebt den schlimmsten Abfall des Wortes, der sich jemals ereignet hat," and that this situation was directly reflected in the modern poem.[6]

Recognition of the danger of poetic speechlessness in the post-war German lyric gained increasing critical attention in the 1960's and early Seventies. Karl Krolow was one of the first to continue an examination of the phenomenon.[7] He maintained that the one attitude which unites the majority of post-war German poets, whether they be radical poetical innovators such as the so-called "concrete poets," or the perpetuators of a set lyrical tradition such as nature poets, is a profound scepticism as to the intrinsic character and function of the type of poetry which they wrote, a "Mißtrauen gegenüber der Sache, der Konzeption des Gedichts."[8] In conjunction with this he pointed out the signs of crisis in the post-war nature lyric (out-worn imagery, unoriginality of themes, monotony), in the contemporary love poem (suppression of genuine emotion leading to coldness or "anti-emotion"), and in poems which rely on absurd ("spielerische") elements for their effect (they can become empty, devoid of any recognisable meaning or purpose).

As a result of these signs of stagnation, of the near-arrival at an apparent end-stage, Krolow detected a trend towards speechlessness in many contemporary poems: it would seem that they have played themselves out, so to speak.

The phenomenon of "Verstummen" or even "Suizid"[9] of the modern poem is characterised, Krolow maintained, by the ever-increasing tendency towards linguistic reduction and the obvious accompanying diminishment of tangible meaning. He stated: "Wir sind mitten im Reduktionsprozeß, im Schrumpfungsprozeß dessen, was am Gedicht Stoff, Gegenstand, Ensemble ist,"[10] and spoke of "progressive Verflüchtigungsvorgänge" which are present in certain modern poems, and of an ethereal, translucent "Schattenhaftigkeit" which forms their essential nature.[11] The next step, he argued, would be complete "Lautlosigkeit und Leere":[12] the emptiness, the intellectual and sensory vapidity of such poems would seem to be the final stage before their complete disintegration.[13]

The highlighting of the crisis of the contemporary poem and the characterising of its position on the border of speechlessness has been continued by other commentators. Hans Bender noted the increase of "Dunkelheiten," "Unverständlichkeiten" and the "puritanical" use of words in the post-war German lyric and stated: "Wenn wir die kennzeichnenden Gedichte des letzten Jahrzehnts und die zukunftsweisenden untereinanderstellen: ihnen allen ist der Drang zur lapidaren Fügung, zur Wortkargheit, zum Verschweigen, zum Verstummen gemeinsam."[14] Such critics as R.N. Maier, Otto Knörrich and Hermann Kunisch use such words as "Sackgasse" or "Endphase" to describe the precarious situation into which modern German poetry seems to have landed,[15] and Walter Höllerer in his "Thesen zum langen Gedicht"[16] severely criticises the trend in the contemporary poem towards increasingly reduced language and content, its tendency to say, and thus mean, less and less, maintaining that this only leads to "verschlüsselteren Gedichten" and stylistic sterility.[17] Hans Mayer even goes as far as to state that the condition of impending speechlessness actually forms the starting point for much modern lyric: "Das Endstadium des umnachteten Hölderlin, dem sich die Sprache offenbar versagt und der sich neue Wörter erfinden muß, scheint zum Anfangsstadium aller heutigen Poeterei geworden zu sein."[18]

By far the most comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon of speechlessness in the contemporary German lyric is contained in Wilhelm Höck's Formen heutiger Lyrik. Verse am Rand des Verstummens.[19] Höck demonstrates, using examples from the lyric of a wide variety of German poets, that the modern poem no longer tends to be a well-rounded, aesthetically or intellectually complete entity, but rather, it has taken on the character of a fragment. The reason for this is the fact that reality itself can no longer be experienced as a homogeneous totality: its essence can no longer be understood, it has become impossible to say anything lasting or binding about it. It is, in effect, "unsagbar." The modern poem, therefore, becomes threatened with speechlessness, linguistically manifested by its fragmented, stammering style and its lack of firmly contoured meaning, as a result of the recognition that it is an inadequate vehicle for the expression of reality or truth. Höck writes:

> Die Erfahrung des Nicht-'Sagbaren', die Nötigung zum Verstummen, auf die nur noch das Fragment zu antworten vermag, soll nicht belangloses lyrisches Gerede zustandekommen - diese Erfahrung sitzt als Stachel im heutigen Gedicht überhaupt, das nach einem Wort Heißenbüttels gesprochen ist 'wie unmittelbar vor dem letzten Atemzug': stammelnd gegen das Sprachlose ankämpfend, ohne Aussicht, ein sagbares 'Ganzes' in dem sprachlichen Griff zu bekommen.[20]

Most of what has been written on the phenomenon of speechlessness in the contemporary German lyric, of which the above references are a typical cross-section, has appeared in article form and, more often than not, these deal with the works of a large number of individual poets and frequently only concentrate upon isolated poems by their respective authors. Whereas this method has the advantage of being able to offer a very generalised overview of the phenomenon in hand, it constantly runs the risk of overgeneralisation, and of subsequently reaching false, or at least half true conclusions as to its basic cause. To mention only two examples, one cannot obtain an adequate answer as to why Paul Celan's poetry tends to disintegrate stylistically from an analysis of merely one poem, as Hans Mayer attempts to do with "Tübingen. Jänner" from the collection Die Niemandsrose.[21] The whole of Celan's works must be taken into consideration if a complete picture is to emerge. Similarly, one cannot, as Höck does in his above-mentioned book, examine a few isolated poems by Nelly Sachs out of context and thereby hope to provide a definitive analysis of speechlessness in her poetry.[22] In the case of the two poets mentioned the causes of impending speechlessness in their works, and the stylistic manifestations of this phenomenon, are many and varied. This fact becomes entirely missed if only individual poems are used in a pars pro toto approach for explaining the problem. Indeed, it is an important feature of modern lyric as a whole that very frequently single poems cannot be satisfactorily understood outside the wider context of the entire works of the individual poet concerned. The single poem nowadays has the tendency merely to illustrate but one facet of any given theme or motif of its author: only rarely does it present a broader perspective.

This study proposes to examine the phenomenon of poetic speechlessness as it occurs in all the works of four major contemporary German lyric poets, Marie Luise Kaschnitz (1901-1974), Günter Eich (1907-1972), Nelly Sachs (1891-1970) and Paul Celan (1920-1970). In order to carry this out thoroughly and systematically and to avoid the relative superficiality with which this theme has hitherto been treated, the works of each individual poet are analysed in more or less strict chronological order and in the light of the poetological theories which underlie them. Only in this way is it possible to understand the effects of the trend towards speechlessness present in their poetry in all their ramifications, and also to see this phenomenon as being an inherent part of their poetic development. This having been done, the reasons for the course towards "Verstummen" in each individual poet's work are compared and contrasted in order to ascertain if there are any similarities between them, and then it is established if the difficulties encountered by the four poets are representative of problems discernible within the wider context of the literature and thought of the modern period as a whole.

There are several reasons for having chosen these four poets in particular. Firstly, and most obviously, the trend towards speechlessness in their lyric is pronounced and, to a varying extent, becomes a determining thematic as well as structural factor. In many instances the themes and style of their poems can only be adequately understood when it is realised that they were consciously written at the very edge of articulable language and constantly threaten to fall into a state of speechlessness, a fact which will become clearer within the body of this study. Secondly, they are amongst the most prominent of the post-war German poets, all having been the recipients of various highly prestigious prizes for their poetry, including the Büchner Prize (Kaschnitz 1955, Eich 1959, Celan 1960), and, as was the case with Nelly Sachs, the Nobel Prize (1966, shared with Schmuel H. Agnon). Thirdly, they are all representatives of a generation of German poets whose lyrical development took place in the period roughly spanning the end of the Second World War to the late 1960's and early Seventies. In many respects their work displays several of the major trends which developed in the post-war German lyric, the most significant of which include the tendency to move in the direction of a greater esotericism and the adoption of a highly laconic mode of expression.

Even though the four poets in question here have only comparatively recently ceased their literary activity, there is no shortage of critical studies on them. That their works do become affected by the dangers of speechlessness has also been recognised to a varying extent, although no study has yet appeared which deals solely with this problem in all its aspects. The following overview of the secondary literature on Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan will serve to give an impression of how commentators have dealt with the phenomenon in hand in their poetry and then subsequently the aims and methods of this study will be delineated in more detail.

Anita Baus' observation, made in 1974, that most of the critical work done on the poetry of Marie Luise Kaschnitz consists mainly of reviews and "Gesamtwürdigungen" still holds good to date.[23] The majority of the articles dealing with the poetess offer very general surveys of her poetic development from its beginnings up to the late Sixties. For the most part these stress the transition in her work from more "classical" stylistic forms (e.g., the use of the sonnet, ode and hexameter) to more modern ones (such as the greater use of free verse, the tendency towards terseness and the occasional appearance of parataxis), and also outline her poetological and moral standpoint.[24]

One of the longest and probably one of the weakest attempts to provide a total view of the development of Kaschnitz' poetry is contained in the dissertation "Marie Luise Kaschnitz. Monographie und Versuch einer Deutung" by

Sigrid Jauke.[25] The author states that it is her aim not so much to provide an interpretation of Kaschnitz' works, but rather to observe them in connection with the poetess' life, that is, to show primarily how biographical events are present in them. The greater part of the dissertation consists of a series of "Nacherzählungen" of a number of Kaschnitz' poems and prose works, and the picture of Kaschnitz' life from childhood to the period following her husband's death is presented rather like a sickly sentimental novel. The study is full of naively uncritical, gushing remarks[26] and when confronted with some of Kaschnitz' later poems which, in certain instances are not quite as easily decipherable as the earlier ones, the author admits defeat and dismisses them as being "ohne eigentlichen Inhalt, die den Leser aber dennoch ob ihrer magischen Kraft und ihrer geheimnisvollen Mystik fesseln"[27]--an empty and even absurd judgement.

Unfortunately, Jauke is not merely content with providing a glorified "Nacherzählung" of Kaschnitz' life and works: her dissertation often consists of what amounts to verbatim echoes from the analyses of other critics, notably from Fritz Usinger.[28] The threat of "Verstummen" in Kaschnitz' poetry is completely overlooked. The general reader who wishes to obtain an introduction into the works of Kaschnitz would therefore do better to read the primary sources themselves rather than occupy himself with Jauke's dissertation, for then, at least, he would be able to gain a first-hand impression untainted by irritating hagiography.

In addition to the general surveys of Kaschnitz' development there are also reviews of her individual volumes of poetry. All too frequently, however, these have the tendency to be written in the style of "Feuilletonismus" and to contain merely a series of personal impressions by their respective authors.[29]

The occurrence of the threat of speechlessness in Kaschnitz' poetry has been recognised by certain critics, but for the most part has not been given sufficient emphasis nor have the reasons for its presence been adequately worked out. Anita Baus, somewhat one-sidedly, implies that it occurs as a result of the grief Kaschnitz suffered after the death of her husband and her failing capacities at the onset of old age.[30] Otto Knörrich and Dolf Sternberger point out that Kaschnitz' poetry eventually reaches "die Schwelle der Schweigezone,"[31] the "Rand des Verstummens,"[32] but they do not go into great detail as to the reasons for this. Wilhelm Höck's contribution to this topic merely consists of a brief analysis of one poem from the collection Neue Gedichte.[33]

The criticisms levelled above and in the accompanying footnotes against some of the secondary literature on Kaschnitz--the tendency towards overgeneralisation and paraphrase, uncritical reverence, unacknowledged repetition of the ideas of one critic by another, one-sided interpretation, journalistic sophistry--also apply to a greater or lesser degree to the critical work done on the other three poets dealt with in this study. The newcomer to contemporary poetry often finds his access hindered to what is considered by many as one of the most "difficult" literary forms, not simply because the primary works themselves demand a maximum of intellectual effort, but also because the opinions and analyses presented in secondary literature are themselves often ambivalent and confusing. A reaction to such "bad" criticism has subsequently begun in that it has become almost fashionable for certain critics to criticise the efforts of other critics and, in some cases, to offer more reasonable and definitive interpretations.[34] A comprehensive survey of such academic machinations, as entertaining as it might prove to be, would, however, be out of place here. Therefore, for the three remaining poets only those analyses which specifically mention the phenomenon of speechlessness or aspects thereof will be discussed.

That Günter Eich's poetry in its latest stages approaches the state of "Verstummen" signalled by the facts that it becomes increasingly laconic and cryptic, and evinces a tone of resignation and defeat, has been widely recognised. Concerning the volumes Zu den Akten (1964) and Anlässe und Steingärten (1966) W.H. Fritz, for example, notes the "wachsende Sprödigkeit" and a "Tendenz zu äußerster Knappheit" which characterise the style of the poems, and the tone of "Melancholie," "Müdigkeit," "Vergeblichkeit," and "Erschöpfung" contained in their themes.[35] Eberhard Horst reinforces this impression when he writes: "Die neue Tonlage ist abgestimmt auf Hoffnungslosigkeit und Mißlingen."[36]

Betty Falkenberg writes with reference to certain of Eich's later poems: "One senses the poet moving up against a wall of silence,"[37] but does not explain concretely what is meant by this, nor does she give any tangible reasons for its cause.

Certain other critics have been somewhat more specific in explaining the reasons for the occurrence of poetological scepticism and "Verstummen" with Eich. Susanne Müller-Hanpft views him as being an exclusively political poet and is of the opinion that the "Zustand vom Ende des dichterischen Bemühens" and the "Hinweis auf ein mögliches Verstummen" which she detects as being present in Eich's poetry after the volume Botschaften des Regens occur as the result of the poet's own consciousness that his work has failed to further his socio-political aims.[38] According to Müller-Hanpft Eich regarded his poetry solely as being a means for criticising society: "Er fordert das Mißtrauen gegen alle etablierten Zustände und die Wachsamkeit gegenüber den kleinsten Erscheinungen. Der Wert eines Gedichts bestimmt sich für Eich in dem Maße, in dem es sich jeder gesellschaftlichen Vereinnahmung entzieht."[39] A constant theme in nearly all of Eich's poetry, especially in his nature poems, is the presentation of the existence of a more real, "absolute" reality which transcends the empirical. Ignoring the full import of this theme, Müller-Hanpft puts forward the idea that this "other" reality was merely intended by Eich to serve as a "listiges Mittel, um die Machtverhältnisse seiner realen Umwelt in Frage zu stellen, um ein Antimodell aufzustellen, das Alternativen zeigt."[40] She maintains, however, that Eich only came to experience "die Hilflosigkeit des dichterischen Wortes"[41] when it was used as a means of social criticism and when he felt that his attempts to show that the individual can free himself from the dictates of society were in vain. Thus she states: "Mit seinen letzten Gedichten kann er nur noch das Vergebliche seines Bemühens konstatieren . . . und die Grenze zum Verstummen anzeigen."[42]

Horst Ohde closely echoes Müller-Hanpft's viewpoint,[43] but, like Heinz F. Schafroth[44] he sees the "Verstummen" of Eich's later poems as also being a form of resistance against society. That is to say, they both regard Eich's tendency to fall silent, his refusal actively to continue his social criticism, as a more stringent form of criticism.

Egbert Kryspin on the other hand completely plays down the so-called political side of Eich's writings and states: " . . . directly and consciously political utterances do occur, but they are quantitatively and qualitatively of very minor importance."[45] As he maintained in a shorter article, Eich's poetry is mainly to be regarded as an attempt to gain insight into the higher, "absolute" reality mentioned above in order to uncover certain fundamental truths of existence as a whole. In the later poems, however, he maintains that Eich admits that his poetic endeavours in this respect have been in vain, "vergeblich im ontologischen Sinne. Zu den Akten ist das Bekenntnis des Scheiterns des Wahrheitssuchers Eich."[46] Otto Knörrich, whilst in no way denying the political aspects of Eich's lyric, also sees its "Tendenz zum Verstummen" as being the result of the poet's inability to find a language commensurate to the elusive nature of reality.[47]

As can be seen, therefore, there is basic disagreement amongst critics as to the causes for the tendency towards speechlessness in Eich's poetry. This stems from the differing way in which they characterise the aims of his work as being either "socio-critical" or "ontological."

Aspects of the phenomenon of speechlessness in the poetry of Nelly Sachs have been variously discussed but nowhere have they received a more comprehensive treatment. Paul Schallück somewhat superficially regards Sachs' earlier poetry as being an attempt to overcome the silence imposed upon her when her native German language was, so to speak, taken away from her during her forced exile in Sweden. He writes: "Nichts anderes geschieht . . . in vielen Gedichten der Nelly Sachs, als daß ein wahrhaft gigantischer Kampf gegen das Schweigen aufgenommen und ausgefochten wird, gegen Heimatlosigkeit, die ja Schweigen bedeutet."[48] He does not specify exactly what is meant by this nor how this idea presents itself in her poetry. Olof Lagercrantz mentions that the theme of "Stummheit" with Nelly Sachs stems from her insight into the fact that it is impossible to express in words the horrors which took place in Nazi Germany,[49] and Otto Knörrich sees the threat of the "Scheitern" of her poetry as originating from its conscious failure to fulfil its main aim which, according to him, is the overcoming of grief at the atrocities committed against mankind.[50]

Gisela Dischner is also of the opinion that the language of Sachs' poetry was "ständig vom Schweigen bedroht"[51] and points out that many of her poems have the tendency to disintegrate syntactically and thus manifest graphically their own descent into speechlessness. She states that it is the main intention of Sachs' lyric "das Nicht-Mehr-Sagbare noch in die Sprache hereinzuholen," and continues: "Aus dieser Intention ist die Tendenz zum Verstummen zu begreifen als das Scheitern davor, das Un-Sagbare noch auszudrücken, und ebenso der sprachgestische Charakter dieser Gedichte (aus dem heraus die Satzzeichen und die Typographie starken Symbolgehalt bekommen)."[52] In some of Sachs' later poetry, however, she notes that the tendency towards speechlessness does not just have negative connotations. The silences which are present after the words have been uttered become, in her view, "productive" and constitute, she somewhat nebulously maintains "eine neue Kommunikation mit dem Leser . . . , denn sie werden Spiegel und Echoräume, in denen der Leser sich selbst zu erkennen beginnt."[53]

Dischner is correct in saying, as will later be proved, that the concept of silence or "Schweigen" in the poetry of Nelly Sachs does have a positive significance, but the function she ascribes to it as just quoted is rather speculative and lacks concrete substance. Beda Allemann was one of the first to point out that it was one of Sachs' main aims through her poetry to speak the mystical language of the dead, which she herself viewed as being pure silence.[54] Thus, Allemann states that the "angestrebte Sprachverfassung" of her poems is "Schweigen"[55] in a positive sense and that this must not be equated with "Resignation und schlechtes Verstummen."[56]

Other interpreters of Sachs' work have also recognised the important role of this mystical silence within the framework of the poetess' world view.[57] Certain of them have pointed out that either the extreme linguistic reduction of the later poems, or the pregnant pauses they contain, are the result of Sachs' attempt to speak the language of silence and are not a sign of their impending disintegration.[58] A certain amount of confusion arises, however, in the case of some critics who do not differentiate clearly enough between speechlessness ("Verstummen") and the positive "Schweigen" which many of Sachs' poems have as their goal to express. Dischner's statement as quoted above, for example, that Sachs' poetry was "ständig vom Schweigen bedroht" is therefore ambivalent.[59] Peter Sager's attempt to explain the relationship between the poetic word and "Schweigen" in her lyric also causes confusion. He writes:

> Ihre (i.e., Sachs') Sprache spricht, wovon sie sonst schweigen müßte. Zugleich schweigt sie über das, wovon sie scheinbar spricht. Sie kann sprechen, weil sie aus dem Schweigen kommt und in Schweigen endet. Das Schweigen spricht, die Sprache schweigt: dieses Paradox durchgehalten zu haben, macht den Rang dieses Werkes aus.[60]

This explanation merely degenerates into a glib but nevertheless opaque play on words which is not at all helpful for an understanding of the phenomena of "Verstummen" and "Schweigen" in Sachs' poetry.

Perhaps the work of no other post-war poet has been more consistently connected with the concept of lyrical speechlessness than that of Paul Celan. Once again, confusion arises in the secondary literature as to the reason for its occurrence. This situation is partly understandable by dint of the extremely hermetic nature of his poetry which does not lend itself to immediate interpretation, and also because of the fact that Celan himself in certain poetological statements seemed quite incapable of giving clear, unambivalent explanations as to the intentions of his work. Certain critics such as Karl Krolow, for example, when discussing the phenomenon of speechlessness in Celan's lyric tend to emulate, in utterances such as the following, the deliberately metaphorical style of the "maestro," and thus offer little which would act as an aid to an understanding of why it occurs. Krolow writes:

> Der zarte, okkupantische Geist seiner Gedichte ist darauf aus, dem Schweigen für eine Weile das Schweigen zu entreißen. Diese kühne Unternehmung ist nur von einer Lyrik zu wagen, die weiß, was Verstummen heißt, und wie nahe sich das lyrische Wort an der heißen oder eisigen Grenze zum Verstummen hin aufhält. Paul Celans Verse streiten mit 'Stimmen,' mit sehr feinen Einwirkungen der Wortmaterie gegen das unaufhörliche Schweigen um ihn her, um uns alle her.[61]

Such a statement, and scores of similar ones could be quoted from other Celan interpreters, neither elucidates the aims of Celan's poetry nor his concepts of "Schweigen" or "Verstummen." It merely serves to surround his work with an impregnable wall of mystery.

Basically, there are two main schools of thought in the secondary literature concerning the reasons for the tendency towards speechlessness in Celan's poetry. The first of these presents the opinion that it occurs as the result of the poet's inability to express a higher "transcendental" reality. Wilhelm Höck and S.S. Prawer, for example, see this reality as being "das Jenseits" or "ein Jenseitiges,"[62] and P.H. Neumann equates it with "das Nichts und das Absolute."[63] For others, such as Otto Knörrich, Alfred Kelletat, Joachim Schulze, Silvio Vietta, W.H. Rey and Corbet Stewart, the other reality which Celan's poetry seeks to explore is silence, or "Schweigen," itself, frequently seen to be commensurate with absolute "Sein," or with the realm of the dead.[64] Thus these critics maintain that Celan's poetry admits defeat, that it falls speechless ("verstummt") when it tries to give form to the transcendental sphere of silence ("Schweigen").

The second school of thought underplays the "transcendental" aspects of Celan's poetry and regards the reasons for its inclination towards speechlessness as lying in its incapacity to verbalise the atrocities committed in the political reality of the War and post-war periods. Christoph Perels, for example, somewhat mystically regards the "Schweigen" present in Celan's poems as being that both of the "Verfolgten und Ermordeten" of the Nazi death camps and that of the universe ("das Schweigen des Alls").[65] Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer also sees his poetry as being "sprachlich eingespannt zwischen dem Verstummen der Opfer und dem Unsagbaren der Utopie, die auch sprachlich unversehrt bleiben muß, damit ihre sternbildhafte Ausstrahlung erhalten bleibt."[66] For Gisela Dischner, Klaus Voswinckel, Peter Buchka and Marlies Janz the "Neigung zum Verstummen" and the preference for "Schweigen" in Celan's poetry are to be regarded as an act of political resistance and protest against a society which condones the spread of inhumanity. For these critics Celan is a poet "engagé" who fervently hopes for the realisation of a political utopia.[67]

As can be seen from the above survey of the secondary literature, the reasons for the tendency towards speechlessness in the lyric of the four poets under discussion have either not been adequately worked out, or else they seem to vary according to the particular viewpoint adopted by each respective author. It will be an important function of this study, therefore, to provide a more definitive picture. The phenomenon of speechlessness will be traced and analysed in all its stages within the context of the entire development of each poet, in order to show how it becomes manifested and why. The primary texts themselves will be concentrated upon, something which only rarely occurs in a good number of other critical studies. In this way the danger of overgeneralisation and reliance on preconceived ideas can be avoided.

The works of each poet are dealt with in a separate chapter which is complete in itself. Every chapter begins with a short introduction where the reader is provided with a general overview of the historical context in which the individual poet wrote, insight into the main thematic and stylistic trends apparent in his or her work, and the poetological goals which were to be achieved. Intimations are then given of the difficulties which the respective poet encountered when trying to accomplish these aims which were to lead directly to the incidence of "Verstummen." In the main body of the chapter the poetological background and the poetic texts themselves are then discussed in detail and the causes and effects of lyrical speechlessness analysed within the context of each poet's artistic development.

The final chapter ascertains if there is any common ground in the reasons for the occurrence of speechlessness in the lyrics of all four poets which, at first sight, would appear to have very little in common, and then shows that the artistic crisis present in their works is representative of a wider crisis evinced in modern literature as a whole.

CHAPTER II

MARIE LUISE KASCHNITZ

> Wir haben gesungen
> Die Katze hat uns eingeholt.
> Jetzt singen wir wieder
> Sagen noch manchmal
> Du Meer
> Du Liebe
> Aber anders
> Mit kleinerem Atem.
> ("Anders," from Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme)

The poetry of Marie Luise Kaschnitz, as represented in eight major volumes,[1] spans the period from the late 1920's to the early 1970's. During this time it underwent considerable changes with regard to both its style and its content which took place concurrently to a change in her fundamental "Weltanschauung."

Kaschnitz began as an uncompromising idealist, who used her poetry at first to prove that mundane existence, despite apparent evidence to the contrary, is part of a harmonious cosmos and thus inherently possesses tangible meaning and value. In this way she had much in common with the poetic tradition of nineteenth century Germany.

Although the element of idealism is never entirely absent from her later work, the fervour and pathos of her earlier optimism becomes dramatically subdued in the course of her development. She gradually experiences increasing difficulties in illustrating poetically the orderly pattern of life and tends, instead, to emphasise its chaotic nature and lack of concrete direction. Simultaneously, the style of Kaschnitz' poems changes. Traditional metric structures and rhyming schemes disappear, and freer, more idiosyncratic forms are employed.

In addition to the use of a more modern poetic style, which frequently makes little attempt at providing cogent communication, certain of the later poems evince signs that a state of poetic speechlessness is imminent. These include utterances of radical poetological scepticism and disturbing disruptions or even complete breakdowns in syntax, which give rise to the impression that Kaschnitz is on the verge of renouncing her poetic endeavours, as the problems they entail have become insuperable.

The course towards speechlessness or "Verstummen" in Kaschnitz' poetry is plotted in the ensuing chapter in the following way. The first section analyses in some detail the poetess' views concerning the primary aims and methods of modern poetry in general. This exposition is important because it provides the poetological background necessary for an understanding of the ideals Kaschnitz intended her own work to accomplish as well. The second section then illustrates how these theoretical aims are applied to the earlier poetry. In the third section an account is given of the changes which took place in Kaschnitz' basic world view. Subsequently, it is shown that these led to formidable modifications in the artistic treatment of her main themes and also to the danger of speechlessness in her poetry. Manifestations of this "Verstummen" in various poems are then illustrated. The final section concludes by giving a summary of the essential causes of speechlessness in Kaschnitz' poetry, and shows how the poetess nevertheless refused in the final instance to submit to the temptation of becoming artistically silent.

1. Marie Luise Kaschnitz' Conception of the Function of Poetry in the Modern Age.

Unlike the other three poets to be dealt with in this study, who demonstrate some reluctance to comment upon their own works or else have the tendency to make somewhat mysterious utterances about their poetry, as if an understanding of it could only be achieved by initiates, Marie Luise Kaschnitz was in the habit of constantly commenting both upon her own works as well as those of others, either in formal literary essays or in her own personal "Aufzeichnungen." Thus it is possible to obtain from her own words a relatively clear picture of her poetic aims and methods. It is of interest to note at this point that whenever she discusses in general terms the nature and function of modern poetry as a whole, she is also, more often than not, simultaneously referring to the nature and function of her own poetry. Thus it may be said that the poetess was making a conscious effort to make her own work keep pace with the current trends in modern poetry as she saw them, and in many respects her poetry may be seen to reflect these trends.

The essay "Vom Wortschatz der Poesie" published in 1949[2] and its expanded version "Vom Ausdruck der Zeit in der lyrischen Dichtung," which appeared in 1950[3] constitute the first attempts by Kaschnitz to explain in the form of scholarly articles her conception of the function of poetry in the modern age. The ideas expressed here, at the time when she was beginning to emerge as a prominent member of the group of post-war German lyricists, remained virtually unchanged in the later stages of her poetic development, although, as will later be seen, her mood of confidence and optimism as to the effectualness of poetry in society becomes diminished in intensity.

In these essays Kaschnitz states that lyric poetry is concerned with revealing essential truths regarding existence. Its fundamental task is to contribute to an understanding of that which she calls "das Reich eines ewigen Seins."[4] It must create an awareness amidst all the transitory phenomena of life of that which is permanently valid and which can reveal "ein göttliches Wesen"[5] as being the underlying controlling force of all existence, a force whose intentions may not always be intelligible to the human mind.

Kaschnitz points out, however, that the modern poem, at least on the surface of things, does not appear to aspire to such high aims, but that rather it has the tendency to portray with greater realism than ever before events and phenomena from the immediate empirical world. Poetry, she felt, seems no longer to be concerned with evoking the presence of "die ewigen Gefühle" conjured up by such words as "Stern und Welle, Liebe und Tod,"[6] and thus point the way to the positive facets of existence. Instead, it is more likely to present the negative side of reality, full of such images drawn from the sphere of every-day life as "elektrische Bahnen, Geruch von Benzin, Schweiß und Eiter."[7] In this way the modern poet seems to have forgotten "das Ewige" and to be concentrating myopically on "das Zeitliche," that which apparently has no permanent value and would therefore be unsuitable for the illustration of the essential harmony of existence. Kaschnitz maintains, then, that in the modern poem the world almost always seems to be presented in a pessimistic light:

> Da ist der Mensch in seiner kranken Leiblichkeit und seinem tierischen Drang. Da ist die Technik, längst nicht mehr angebetet, sondern in all ihrer grauenhaften Unmenschlichkeit schaudernd erkannt. Da ist die Natur auf ihrer letzten Todesstufe, faulend, stinkend, von dem phosphorischen Leuchten der Zersetzung belebt. Die Endzeit, noch bei Trakl von dem zauberischen Glanz herbstlicher Schönheit umspielt, enthüllt sich nun in einer Häßlichkeit, die über die Wirklichkeit hinausgreifend, den Angsttraum einer gepeinigten Seele zu spiegeln scheint.[8]

By not attempting to elevate the human spirit directly, to point out explicitly the hidden unity of existence, but by only depicting the "Ohnmacht und Verlorenheit des Menschen, der, von Gott vergessen, in der Finsternis hintreibt,"[9] the modern poem seems, therefore, to evince more than ever the cultural and moral nihilism which in varying measure has manifested itself in European literature and thought since the mid-nineteenth century.

According to Kaschnitz, however, the direct confrontation with life in all its deleteriousness which occurs in the modern poem is not intended merely to engender a feeling of nihilism and despair. In her opinion this new poetry still serves to create awareness of the divine unity of all things just as effectively as more traditional forms which concentrate almost exclusively on the direct presentation of harmony, beauty or human virtue. She holds that this can be achieved if the poet in his portrayal of reality demonstrates "die unerbittliche Wahrheit des Erlebens,"[10] that is, if he presents reality exactly as it is and does not attempt to endow it with the appearance of false beauty. In this way, even though in the present age the image of reality which he will present will of necessity be a negative one, he ought still be able to show that this negative aspect, once brought out into the open and accepted, can actually act as a means with which to point the way to the positive elements of existence. He will be able to show that the negative is but one side of the total cosmic unity, and that once this has been realised, the positive aspects of life will be recognised. As Kaschnitz sums up:

> Des Ewigen Ehre wird nicht angetastet, und ein Ölfleck auf dem Asphalt offenbart mit seinem irisierenden Glanz alle Schönheit der Welt. Wo der Mensch klein wird, wächst die Größe des Universums, und wer die Sinnlosigkeit darzustellen vermeint, entdeckt vielleicht gerade in ihr wieder einen geheimen Sinn. Wer mit dem Ernst der Wahrhaftigkeit zu formen versucht, schafft schon Ordnung, selbst wenn das Chaos sein Gegenstand ist.[11]

From these essays, therefore, it can be discerned that Kaschnitz sees the modern poem as being a medium for providing hope to mankind in the midst of what appears to be a hopeless predicament. It is a means to stave off the complete annihilation of human optimism and to re-instate the belief in a higher order which directs human destiny in a world where faith in such values has been seriously undermined. She writes: "So scheint es manchmal, als wäre die heutige Lyrik nichts anderes als der letzte Aufschrei der Menschheit, ehe das große Schweigen der Entmenschlichung über die Erde sinkt."[12] This statement gives an idea of the great importance which Kaschnitz attaches to the function of modern poetry. With an almost dramatic zeal she proclaims that it offers a final opportunity for man to re-assert his "Liebes- und Glaubenskraft"[13] in the face of the de-humanising trends of present-day society which threaten to silence him completely. Indeed, she believes that the modern poem is essentially a moral struggle against this "Schweigen der Entmenschlichung."

All these poetological ideas which Kaschnitz ascribes to the nature and intent of the modern poem are fundamentally projections of her own personal "Weltanschauung" and the aims and methods of her own poetry. As she stated elsewhere in her theoretical writings she regarded her own lyric as being an attempt to uncover a "höhere Wahrheit"[14] by portraying reality as it actually is, even if this means dwelling heavily on its pernicious aspects. She was of the firm belief that the tragic elements of life were but one side of the total unity of existence, and so it is the ultimate aim of her poetry to show that the positive side also has its place, even though its presence is hidden. In this way she regarded her poetry as a means of conveying hope during a historical point of time where it seems to have completely disappeared. This idea is summarised in the following lines:

> Versuchen wir uns hinzugeben an eine Wirklichkeit, die das Chaos umfaßt. Nicht halb so schlimm ist alles, sondern doppelt und dreifach so schlimm, als wir es im Augenblick sehen. Aber nur auf dem Weg der bittersten Erkenntnis spüren wir die Kräfte der Erneuerung, die aus den Zeiten des Wahnsinns erblüht.[15]

As she wrote in a later essay, Kaschnitz saw the role of poetry as being an instrument for bringing about "Weltverbesserung": just like the modern theatre, she maintains, it still should preserve its traditional function of being a "moralische Anstalt."[16] It can carry out this aim by directly attempting to reflect the age in which it is written. It should not try to conceal the negative aspects if these happen to be the prevailing forces in society: rather it is its hope to arouse in the reader a reaction against them and thus prepare the way for the re-instatement of positive human values.

For the most part Kaschnitz succeeded in putting the above ideals into practice in her earlier poetry: the following section will show how.

2. The Application of Kaschnitz' Conception of Poetry in the Earlier Works: Gedichte (1947), Totentanz und Gedichte zur Zeit (1947), Zukunftsmusik (1950), Ewige Stadt. Rom-Gedichte (1952).

In addition to the poetological statements cited above, which give a broad view of Kaschnitz' ideas concerning modern poetry in general, she also makes specific reference in certain passages from her "Aufzeichnungen" to the nature and purpose of her own early poetry. Brief mention of these at this stage will provide a useful introduction to the theoretical tenets which underlie her first four volumes of lyric and present an even preciser picture of her aims.

In *Wohin denn ich* (1963), for example, she asserts that it was her intention in her early work:

> . . . den trostsüchtigen Leser in seine Schranken zurückzuweisen, ihm seinen alten Wunsch nach Erhebung und Erlösung auszutreiben, ihn im düsteren Gegenbild der Poesie diese selbst erkennen zu lassen. Ich hatte das alles in einem verbindlichen Stil geschrieben, ohne Verachtung, und bei aller Strenge nur bemüht, dem Hörer eine Welt zu erschließen, die, karger und häßlicher als die der vergangenen Jahrhunderte, gleichwohl sein Einverständnis verdiente.[17]

This statement is a reinforcement of the poetological ideas outlined in the previous section, but here Kaschnitz *expressly* says that an important function of her own poetry was the "Erhebung und Erlösung" of the reader from the dark times in which he lives. It is to be regarded as a means of rediscovering consolation and moral comfort ("Trost"), in a world where, because of its chaotic nature, this would seem to be impossible.

In Tage, Tage, Jahre. Aufzeichnungen she also admits that she always strove in her early poetry "unwillkürlich nach Ausgleich, nach Versöhnung und Harmonie."[18] That is to say, no matter how bleakly she portrayed the real world, she still felt compelled to inject notes of optimism and hope. These attitudes are an intrinsic part of her early work, as will now be illustrated.

Kaschnitz' first volume of poetry, entitled simply Gedichte, published in 1947, contains poems written during the years 1928-1944. Their subject matter encompasses the writer's own experiences of childhood in and after the First World War, impressions of her travels in Italy and Greece and the time she spent in East Prussia, an evocation of the relative calm of the inter-war years, and also a depiction of man's position vis-à-vis the world around him during the "dunkle Zeit" of the Second World War.

The book is headed by a motto consisting of two lines by the Italian poet Carducci: "Ma ci fu dunque un giorno / Su questa terra il sole?" ("but if, one day, it is dark, how will the earth find the sun?"). These words set the tone for the entire work in that the poems therein contained, when seen as a whole, aim to prove that there not only was light on this earth in the past, but that it also exists in the present age of darkness and will exist in the future too. The motto is a challenge to prove that earthly existence does conform to a higher universal pattern, that it does have a meaning. The poems of this first work endeavour to meet this challenge by creating a feeling of hope where there seems only to be despair and a feeling of hopelessness.

In the Gedichte Grethe Merck points out that Kaschnitz adheres to a belief in the essential order of the world.[19] The poems show that the world in all its ambivalence is really part of an orderly cosmos, where all that, which to human eyes at least, would appear to be without meaning or purpose, is essentially part of one universal pattern. Fritz Usinger explains the nature of this pattern: although he refers explicitly to certain of Kaschnitz' other works, the features which he discerns are also present in the earlier Gedichte. He states that Kaschnitz is concerned with showing the "unzerreißbaren Zusammenhang des Oben und des Unten, des Lichten und des Dunklen, des Lebens und des Todes."[20] That is to say, her works evince the belief that existence consists of two sides, one of which may be termed positive and the other negative. These are, however, not separated but are inextricably fused. Thus Kaschnitz endeavours to prove that in darkness there is light, in death life, in ugliness beauty, in "Vergehen" "Werden," and so on. She believes that all facets of existence are subject to these laws of polarity, and her poems attempt to demonstrate the "Geheimnis der Doppelheit des Lebens."[21] In doing so they are able to reveal that even if the negative aspects of life seem to predominate there exist, nevertheless, positive ones which remain to be discovered. It is in this way that they are able to provide the "Erhebung" and "Trost" spoken of earlier.

Many of the Gedichte deal with the sphere of nature, for Kaschnitz believed that it is here that the fundamental pattern of existence as a whole may be viewed the most clearly. As she implies in the collection of essays Menschen und Dinge 1945, if man is able to understand the workings of nature, then he will also be in a position to understand his own existence: there is fundamentally no distinction between the worlds of man and nature because they are both subject to the same constant laws of creation.[22] In these essays she maintains that nature progresses in a state of continual growth and nothing is able to upset its balance. It evolves in eternal cycles of "Vergehen" and "Werden." As soon as it appears to be destroyed, new life emerges again--

> Die im Herbst ausgebildeten Knospen, die Todesmattigkeit des Früh-Sommers, die strahlende Helle des Märzlichtes über dem Schnee und die frühe Dämmerung der reichen Erntezeit besagen unaufhörlich, wie Tod und Leben sich geheimnisvoll durchdringen, wie, unseren Augen nicht erkennbar, Zukünftiges schon fertig ausgebildet im Schoße des Vergehenden ruht. Auf solche Weise den Sieg des Lebens verkündend wird die Natur heute fast zum Sinnbild eines seligen Lebens überhaupt.[23]

Thus for Kaschnitz the harmony which exists in nature is the product of the workings of two opposing forces which do not negate but rather which complement each other. Death or destruction do not form a definitive end as they bear within themselves the seed for new growth and life. In this way nature can be regarded as a source of consolation for man whose own existence follows the same natural laws. As soon as he accepts that nature's ultimate harmony consists in the constant interplay of two forces--the demonic and dangerous as well as the beautiful[24]--then he will realise that his own existence, too, will not come to an abrupt end if only the destructive forces seem at any given point of time to rule it.

A number of the nature poems in the Gedichte illustrate the ideas outlined above. Some of them show nature to be a dark, mysterious, sometimes cruel force, where death and sterility are prevalent.[25] Others stress the harmonious, beautiful and often idyllic aspects of nature.[26] A good many of the poems, however, show in continual variation that nature consists of a combination of both these aspects, in which the positive ones ("Werden", new growth, life) more often than not gain the victory over the negative ones ("Vergehen", decay, death). The following excerpt will serve to illustrate this last point:

Zum Parnaß

So hebt es an. Mit einem hellen Strahlen,
Mit einem Widerschein der Sommerfeuer
Im niederen Dickicht. Rote Blätter glühen
Und Thymian und Heidesträucher blühen
In tiefer Mulde unterm reinen Blau.

Und dann die Schlucht. Von schroffen Felsenwänden
Dem Lichte abgesperrt und nichts als Öde,
Geröll und Stein. Ein fremder Schritt begleitet
Und schreckt den Wanderer, der einsam reitet;
Ein kalter Wind weht vom leeren Fluß - -

Jenseits des Passes aber sind die lieblich
Besonnten Hänge voll von goldnen Reben
Und Überfluß der Gärten und inmitten
Ein trunkener Gesang und Tanz von Schritten
Und rote Tierhaut schon vom Weine prall.

Und wieder Kälte. Winter. Eisge Winde
den hochgetürmten Felsenort durchstreichend.
Die Schäfer kehren von des Berges Spitze
In rot und blauem Rock und Lammfellmütze
Und Frauen wandern spinnend in Geläut.

. . . .

Doch ist noch Sommer. An des Weges Kehre
Ist schon das Graun vergessen. Falter schweben,
Der Abend glüht. Zur hohen Straße drängen
Olivenwälder sich an sachten Hängen,
Gleich einer grünen Welle aus dem Tal.

Und wie das Licht der Tiefe sacht entgleitet,
Da steigen aus den Wäldern dichte Schwärme
Von Vögeln, die sich aus dem Schatten heben
Und zu dem grellen Glanz der Felsen streben
Und kreisen über dem kastalischen Quell.[27]

The poem is a depiction in epic proportions of the changing panorama encountered on an ascent of Mount Parnassus. In the first stanza nature is seen to be in full bloom, a sphere of dazzling brilliancy. In the second stanza, however, the vista suddenly changes and a more sterile, threatening aspect of nature is brought into focus, conveyed by such images as "Öde," "Geröll und Stein," "kalter Wind," "leerer Fluß." In the third and fourth stanzas the same rapid change of scene as was met with in the first two stanzas also takes place. On the one hand the more beautiful and serene side of nature is portrayed ("die lieblich besonnten Hänge," "goldne Reben," "Überfluß der Gärten"), whereas on the other darker forces are seen to prevail in the natural landscape ("Kälte," "Winter," "eisge Winde"). Thus in the main body of the poem the whole of nature is seen to consist of two seemingly opposing aspects. In the last two stanzas, however, it becomes clear that it is the lighter side of nature which ultimately triumphs over the darker: the threat posed by the more menacing forces quickly passes and nature is seen once again to be vibrantly alive.

In contrast to those poems in this first volume which mainly deal with nature and the underlying forces which rule it, in the final section entitled "Dunkle Zeit" Kaschnitz turns her attention primarily to man's situation in the contemporary world which has been ravaged by war. The poetic treatment here of an actual historical situation marks the beginning of a trend which is present in all her ensuing volumes of poetry: Kaschnitz as a poet is essentially "wirklichkeitsbezogen."

In these poems she is basically concerned with showing that the same elemental laws of "Vergehen" and "Werden" which she revealed as being present in nature also govern human existence. In this way they endeavour to prove that even though the world appears to be in a state of chaos there still is hope that this condition can be overcome.

The poems which deal with man's contemporary situation are basically of two types. The first of these portrays the darker aspects of the current human predicament, whereas the second shows, just as in the nature poems, that existence consists of an intricate pattern of opposing elements, where the latent possibility is always present that the more chaotic ones can be overcome.

In the first type of poem the predominant mood is one of total pessimism. The present age is described as a

"Zeit der Finsternis" in which "alles Blühende" lies in ashes. There seems to be no escape for man from the feeling of horror with which civilisation has become saturated.[28] Accompanying this state of desolation is the loss of beauty and such human virtues as love and friendship which were once regarded as "köstlichen Gewinn und reinsten Trost" in times of suffering and which helped to alleviate the burden.[29] No way out of this dilemma is seen. Certain poems state categorically that even the future will be tainted with the death and destruction that have taken place in the present,[30] and others pessimistically proclaim that chaos has become a permanent state on earth from which there will be no mitigation.[31] Such poems, therefore, exude an atmosphere of nihilism and despair.

In the second type of poem, however, which outnumbers the first by far, Kaschnitz continually endeavours to show that no matter how desperate the present situation might seem, man still has the opportunity to achieve a better future. This can be accomplished by refusing to submit completely to the destructive forces of the present in the realisation that they are but one aspect of the total world pattern. In poem after poem she demonstrates that the negative facets of existence, although they have to be endured--"Das kühne Herz / Der freie Geist / Muß sich bescheiden, / Und muß verstehen was es heißt / Die Welt erleiden"[32]--are but one stage in the general progression of creation, and that there is always the possibility that a turning point will occur in which human destiny will radically change for the better. Thus many of the poems take on the character of rallying-calls to man not to give up hope nor to renounce such virtues as "Liebe" or altruism, for it is only through these that the morally corrosive forces can be resisted and eventually overcome:

Steht im Westen noch ein rotes Glühen
Wie von Untergang und Blutgericht,
Glüht es doch für alle Zeiten nicht;

Wind will wehen, Rosen wollen blühen
Mit der Hoffnung heiligem Bemühen
Wecken wir den Strom der Zuversicht.[33]

In the collection Gedichte therefore, Kaschnitz constantly creates an awareness of the presence of the more positive side of life. The poems continually strive to generate a mood of optimism, and this attitude has much in common with the idealistic tradition of German Classicism.[34] As has been observed, however, this optimism is not based upon a blind faith in a kind of paradisiacal, utopian harmony which governs a world in which everything is all beauty and serenity.[35] On the contrary, Kaschnitz in no way denies the presence of seemingly destructive forces, which are constantly portrayed even in these earlier poems. They are, however, always counterbalanced by more positive ones which are shown ultimately to predominate, or else the hope is expressed that the time will come when this will be the case.

The next three volumes of Kaschnitz' poetry, Gedichte zur Zeit (1947), Zukunftsmusik (1950), and Ewige Stadt. Rom-

Gedichte (1952), contain the same basic thematic patterns and "Weltanschauung" as were discerned in the early Gedichte. The emphasis of the subject matter, however, becomes shifted to the reality of the years immediately following the Second World War. The setting for the first two volumes is Germany and Europe in general, and in the third, Rome, which, as Usinger points out, was considered by the poetess as being representative of the paradoxes of modern life as a whole.[36]

Stylistically speaking these three volumes differ appreciably from the first one in that the earlier stricter verse forms, such as the sonnet, give way to the freer rhythms of longer elegies and odes. The new looser forms and the tendency towards the writing of longer lyrical cycles enabled a greater intensity of poetic feeling and utterance as well as offering a means of describing reality not just from one side but from many.[37] Thus, these later poems, in contrast to those of the earlier Gedichte, are more successful in presenting a composite image of a definite political reality in all its varying facets.

In each of these volumes Kaschnitz is essentially concerned with achieving that which she set out to do in the Gedichte, namely, to show that the foundations of existence consist of seemingly opposing darker and lighter aspects, of evil and good, and that there is always the hope that ultimately the more positive forces will triumph, that, in this case, the humane will gain the victory over the inhuman.

The volume Gedichte zur Zeit comprises three cycles entitled "Große Wanderschaft," "Rückkehr nach Frankfurt," and "Beschwörung." The first depicts the state of those people who had been made physically and spiritually homeless by the War and who were forced to rebuild their lives out of the ruins. The second cycle is a portrayal of post-war life in the destroyed town of Frankfurt am Main, and the last consists primarily of a series of evocations of various scenes set against the background of the War.

In each of these poems the realities of the War and the post-war years are unfolded vividly, with no attempt being made to euphemise the situation poetically. People are still seen to suffer from "Bombenangst" even though the War has ended.[38] Images such as "Kehrricht," "Asche," "grauer Verfall," "Schrecken," "Blut," conjure up visions of a wasteland. The town of Frankfurt is anthropomorphised: its eyes are "erloschen," its mouth "zerrissen."[39] The river Main has been transformed into a cesspit:

> Gefahr ist der Fluß geworden,
> Seine Wasser führen den Rest
> Von Sengen und Brennen und Morden,
> Krieg und Leichenpest,
> Giftige Keime in Schwaden
> Absud von Jammer und Not.[40]

The situation of man is similar to that of the sterile surroundings in which he lives. He is described as being homeless and oppressed, aimlessly wandering towards no known goal. He has been reduced to the status of an animal, self-centered and without compassion:

War nicht des Menschen Gang einst aufgerichtet
Und unterschied ihn dieses nicht vom Tier?
Jetzt geht er tief im Joch. Ein Zerrbild nur
Und weniger als jede Kreatur.[41]

His resistance has almost completely been beaten down; he is without hope; he does not know where to turn in his helplessness, and he often wishes that he had been killed when the war was at its height in order not to have to suffer the degradation of the present. In this situation the dividing-line between nightmare and reality has become completely obliterated:

Träume, wie oft nicht auch
Schrecken und Todeshauch,
Keller, die eingestürzt,
Treppen, ins Nichts gespannt,
Tote, uns zugewandt,
Liebstes Gesicht.
Bis dann des Morgens Licht
Finstern Zauber brach,
Leben uns tausendfach
All das Verhängte
Noch einmal schenkte.[42]

These images of total devastation with which Kaschnitz portrays the post-war situation are, however, in all the Gedichte zur Zeit offset by others which proclaim the ultimate "Sieg des Lebens" which, as was mentioned earlier, she believed to be demonstrated in the workings of nature. She continually shows that amidst the tragedy of the historical circumstances, or, to remain with the original terminology, during the "Vergehen" of civilisation, there exist positive forces which will be instrumental in bringing about new growth or "Werden." Thus, although the oppressed post-war masses are depicted as being in a state of abject misery, Kaschnitz nevertheless points out that the tenacity of the human spirit never becomes completely extinguished. Despite their outward dilemma these people never fully submit to nihilistic despair:

> Diese vielen
> Gebückt und ausgestreckt, verkrümmt vom Tragen
> Schlaflos im ewig wandernden Vorbei
> Der fremden Füße. Sehr von Gott geschlagen
> Und heimgesucht von ungezählten Plagen
> Und doch in ihres Elends Mißgestalt
> Noch Spielende. . . . .[43]

They are still capable of acts of love, compassion and altruism, they constantly experience the desire to press forward, an "Immerweiterwollen,"[44] and ultimately refuse to yield to the forces of their immediate circumstances. The reason for this underlying optimism is their refusal to believe that an end-stage of civilisation has been reached. Every individual has within him, Kaschnitz proclaims, a deeply rooted faith in the power of change:

> In der Tiefe eines Augenpaares
> Sah ich eine Ferne traumerwacht
> Eine Flucht von schönen Sälen war es
> Licht und Klänge lieblich ausgedacht -
> Doch Traum ist nicht. Allüber ein Verändern
> Das ist schon tief in uns hineingesunken
> Und wohnt in diesen unbefahrbaren Ländern
> Des Innern als ein übergroßer Gast
> Aufstörend viel . . . .[45]

Indeed, Kaschnitz insists that the greatest hope for the future occurs when man has reached an ebb in his fortunes. Now that civilisation seems to have reached its nadir the only direction that it can take in the future is one which will eventually lead to its zenith. Thus it is "die ganz Versehrten, jedes Dings Beraubten / Die Gliederlosen, Blinden, Totgeglaubten,"[46] who possess the firmest belief in the possibility for a change for the better.

In the Gedichte zur Zeit therefore, Kaschnitz insists that the destructive forces of existence are a hard fact of life: they cannot be ignored or forgotten but must be accepted and endured. Simultaneously she points out that, as far as man is concerned, although he lives in dark times, there are other forces at work, such as love, beauty and hope, which, if experienced and developed to the full, will eventually attain supremacy and thus lead to a better world. This idea forms the conclusion to the whole volume:

> Wenn wir nur üben dies
> Fürchten und Lieben, dies
> Ringen mit Gegenwart;
> Bis sie zum Segen ward
>
> Wird uns Besonnenes
> Richtig belehren,
> Werden wir Kommendes
> Nicht überhören.[47]

The volume Zukunftsmusik continues and augments the themes outlined above. It advocates that all facets of life must be accepted, and exultantly expresses the conviction that eventually in the future a full entelechy of the positive elements will take place:

Vom Kommenden hör' ich sie flüstern, die ewige Stimme.
Nicht von Maschinen spricht sie,
Nicht von Vermehrung der Ernten,
Nicht von gewonnenem Schiffsraum.

Zusammenklang sagt sie und Würde des Menschen und Freiheit.
Hoffnung sagt sie und Liebe, das süßeste Wort.[48]

Although somewhat more subdued in tone the cycle of poems entitled Ewige Stadt. Rom-Gedichte once again expresses the notion that life consists of the balanced interplay of opposing elements, and that no matter how arbitrary and desolate the external world may appear the positive forces are always present and can prevent a fall into abject despair.

The work depicts a wanderer's impressions of Rome on his return there "aus Zeiten des Untergangs,"[49] that is, after the Second World War.[50] Everything appears "fremd"; the inhabitants of the city leading their daily lives seem to be grotesque if not repulsive: "die Alte / Daneben mit dem Enkel auf dem Arm / Einschlürft das schlangenähnliche Gericht / Und fetter roter Saft vom Mund ihr träuft"; "Im Kellerhauch auf der vergessenen Rennbahn / Kauern die Mütter mächtiges Gesäß / Brüste voll Milch und träg gepaarte Schenkel."[51] The whole place exudes an aura of cheapness, vulgarity and fear; death and decay seem to have gained the upper hand. Yet it is shown that in the midst of these there is still beauty, peace and love, moments when the wanderer feels in harmony with these conflicting surroundings:

Und alles hat Raum und alles geheime Entsprechung
Tief in dir selbst.[52]

The penultimate poem of the cycle is a call to accept all sides of Rome, this city representing for Kaschnitz, as has already been stated, life as a whole:

> Nimm auf Dich die Unrast, den Lärm, die metallene Dürre
> Und das Übermaß des Lichts, auf das alles hinausläuft.
> Nimm auf Dich das Leben.[53]

The final poem points to the fact that no matter how hard life might seem and how difficult it may be to accept its paradoxes love cannot be extinguished and the processes of new growth, which hold the promise of a better future, are always at work.

In these first volumes of poetry, therefore, Kaschnitz endeavours to present reality in all its facets to show its underlying order. In the speech which she gave on accepting the Büchner prize in 1955 she stated that in these early poems "weniger das Chaos als die Sehnsucht nach einer neuen Ordnung wesentlich seien. All meine Gedichte waren eigentlich nur ein Ausdruck des Heimwehs nach einer alten Unschuld oder die Sehnsucht nach einem aus dem Geist der Liebe neu geordneten Dasein."[54] Even if existence appeared to be ruled by chaos it was her aim to make apparent the possibility for the re-instatement of harmony. By highlighting the negative aspects of existence, the positive sides would also manifest themselves. In the "Aufzeichnungen" Wohin denn ich Kaschnitz portrays herself as being "eine ewige Anfängerin, bis es mir schön wird, das Schreckliche."[55] This attitude also comes through forcefully in these early poems.

In ensuing sections it will be shown, however, that there takes place a shift in emphasis in Kaschnitz' later lyric in that "das Schreckliche" of existence comes more to the foreground. It becomes more difficult for her to present a harmonious view of the world and this, in turn, threatens to nullify her artistic intentions and brings her poetry to the brink of speechlessness.

3. Poetry and the Disintegration of Reality: Neue Gedichte (1957), Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme (1962), Ein Wort weiter (1965).

i) The Struggle to Create Hope.

The next volume of Kaschnitz' poems to appear after Ewige Stadt was the collection Neue Gedichte published in 1957, which contains pieces dating back as far as 1951. The work, as most critics agree, marks a decisive stage in the poetess' development for it is here that her poetry becomes more critical of reality.56 The result is that her idealistic optimism concerning the course of the world becomes more subdued. Concurrent with this new critical attitude the style and tone of the poems become more "modern." There is far less pathos, and an ever-growing tendency towards abstraction can be noted which continues in varying degrees in all her ensuing volumes of poetry.

Kaschnitz herself comments upon the gradual changes which occured in her lyric in the collection of "Aufzeichnungen" Engelsbrücke.57 Here she describes how it was possible for her in the earlier cyclical poems to present a relatively orderly "Zusammenschau" of reality. She was able, she maintains, to show with some facility the common denominator of all the multifarious aspects of the external world.58 As was shown in the previous section, the "gemeinsame Nenner" of all the earlier poems was the pattern of the constant interplay of the opposing forces of life with the confidence being expressed that the positive ones would eventually gain the victory. After the immediate post-war years, however, Kaschnitz claims that it was no longer feasible for her to portray such a well-regulated view of the world. She writes: "Es fehlte das schicksalhaft Zusammenschließende der Erscheinungen, das in der eben vergangenen Zeit so reichlich vorhanden gewesen war."59 Here she is implying that she was experiencing for the first time a phenomenon which had previously become prevalent in European thought and literature since the turn of the century, namely the so-called "Realitätszerfall." Reality, which for her had once seemed to follow a kind of universal pattern, began to become problematical. All the various components of this pattern, instead of fitting together, now seemed to have become splintered and dispersed and to be lacking in any cogent meaning of purpose. Thus, the poems written after Ewige Stadt, when viewed as a whole, do not try to present a well rounded-off image of reality, but rather they frequently have the tendency to be in themselves, or even individually to consist of "eine lose Reihe von Eindrücken," in which there need be no "innere Verbindung," and which often seem "in der Luft zu hängen," as Kaschnitz puts it.60 In this way the poems directly reflect the ambiguousness of the reality which they have as their goal to portray. Consequently they are often as paradoxical and as ambivalent as that reality itself seems to be.

Kaschnitz regarded the very same trends which she observed in her own poetic development as being characteristic of modern literature and art as a whole. She maintains that, because the world has become so complex, so like a "Pandämonium"[61] and alien to the human faculties of perception, it has become impossible for the modern poem to describe it by means of the "einfachen Aussage."[62] Because of its endless mutability the poet or artist is unable to say anything final or binding regarding its nature.[63] All that art can do if it is to describe reality adequately is to faithfully reproduce "die Zersplitterung, das zusammenhanglose Nebeneinander,"[64] "die Vielfalt der Erscheinungen,"[65] which constitute its internal and external make-up. The intention of such a reproduction is to form a composite "Bild der Welt,"[66] a comprehensive "Bild der Jetztzeit,"[67] in the hope that some kind of order may eventually be seen and that life may be better understood. As Kaschnitz writes: "Eines Tages werden wir vielleicht hinter so vielen zersplitterten Erscheinungen etwas Neues erkennen, ein Gesetz, das sie alle in sich schließt, ein Leitbild, das unserem veränderten Lebensgefühl entspricht."[68]

In accordance with the idea that poetry should encompass as many facets of reality as possible the subject matter of the three volumes Neue Gedichte, Dein Schweigen - meine

Stimme and Ein Wort weiter becomes much broader. The themes of the poems include descriptions of certain natural landscapes and towns, social and political criticism, a commentary on the state of the modern world, and personal, autobiographical elements concerning the grief of the poetess just before and after the death of her husband as well as her own position as an individual confronted with the world.

The introduction of very personal elements into Kaschnitz' poetry has led certain critics to regard her as being to a large extent an autobiographical poet.[69] Indeed, in an interview with Ekkehart Rudolph she admitted that "aus meinen Gedichten kann man mein Leben eigentlich einfach ablesen."[70] However she was of the conviction that a very personal, subjective "Selbstbespiegelung" of one's own position can also be viewed on a more objective plane. It can be considered as a contribution to a more general and comprehensive "Bild der Welt."[71] Thus she believed that those elements in her work which are apparently personal and subjective are also capable of being understood on an impersonal and objective level: her own impressions and thoughts can directly reflect and be representative of the experiences of others.[72]

The "Bild der Welt" which Kaschnitz presents in these three volumes is predominantly a pessimistic one. In those poems which depict Southern landscapes and towns no attempt is made to present an idealised picture in keeping with more traditional concepts of the antique world. Concerning the ten poems of the cycle "Sizilischer Herbst" from the collection Neue Gedichte,[73] the majority of which have as their title some kind of exotic place-name such as Palermo or Taormina, Fritz Usinger states that instead of depicting an idyllic image of the South, they reproduce quite simply "eine unidealistische, illusionslose Schau von Realitäten des heutigen Lebens, weitab von jeder antikischen Gloriole, von jedem mittelmeerischen Glanz . . . kurz gesagt: nichts von südlicher Apotheose."[74] As a result of Kaschnitz' more realistic depiction, the darker side of Sicily comes to the fore, evoked by such images as "giftgrüner Kohl," "die spitzige Trauer Kindergesicht / Hungerbauch, brennender Auschlag," "der schweigende Garten Sterbegeruch," "Leichenbegräbnis bei Nacht im Armensarg," "Rote Trambahnbillets / Und Blasen von Kinderspeichel."

These more dismal impressions are also to be found in those poems of the Neue Gedichte which have as their theme aspects of the Italian landscape.[75] In these attention is focused more on the demonic and desolate aspects of the South. As in certain other poems to be found in the collections Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme and Ein Wort weiter, namely "Rom 1961" and "Römischer Sommer"[76] which list the impressions of the lyrical "Ich" of Rome, no attempt is made, in contrast with the earlier "Southern" poems, to end on a note of consolation or hope. Indeed in the Rome poems the lyrical subject is often shown to be unable to put any definite order upon the impressions which it perceives. At times it even seems to lose its mental balance, as it were, and to become confused by the vortic sensations which its mind experiences:

> Alle Pinien fand ich
> Ihre Platanenalleen
> In Bewegung gesetzt
> Ihre rostroten Drehbühnenpaläste
> Ihre Statuen
> Säulengehege
> Mir vorübergerissen rundum.[77]

Rome is seen to epitomise "das furchtbar eintönige Leben,"[78] in the midst of which man, described as "das gepeinigte Tier," sleeps "stöhnend, Mund offen."[79]

The mood of disconsolateness and alienation contained in these Southern poems is also forcefully apparent in other poems which have as their setting German nature landscapes. In the three cycles "Jahreszeiten im Breisgau," "Herbst im Breisgau," and "Bericht vom Neumagen"[80] nature and the "Heimat," which in Kaschnitz' early poetry were mainly presented as a source of consolation, a sphere where the elemental pattern of existence could be most clearly observed, are now seen in a totally different light.

"Jahreszeiten im Breisgau" is divided into four sections, each being devoted to one of the seasons. Spring is not jubilantly celebrated as the time when new growth begins. Seen through the perspective of the lyrical subject, it has become irreal and saturated with sadness and death. The beauties of Summer are overshadowed by the melancholic insight that all things are transitory: even when they appear to be full of life they have the mark of death upon them:

> Die Kinder spielen, haben weiße Haare
> Silberner Aussatz säumt die Junirose.[81]

The Autumn is seen as the time when everything hurries into darkness, and at Christmas, when thoughts of fear or death are most likely to be absent, the lyrical "Ich" is left isolated.

In "Herbst im Breisgau" the alienation of the lyrical subject from its familiar surroundings is also emphasised. The "Heimat" is described as a place where, ostensibly, there should be alleviation of pain (". . . ein Ort, / Wo der Vogel im hohen Tambour, / Der wundgeschlagene, / Seinen Ausweg findet"), a refuge from the tribulations of the outside world (". . . ein Ort, / Wo der Hund mit dem goldbraunen Fell, / Der im Walde lärmt, / Heimkehrt am Abend"), and where there should be love, which would overcome the experience of despair ("Wo die Liebe wandert / Auf Schären des Untergangs / Im Herzen der roten Sonne.") But this is not the case. All these qualities of the "Heimat" have disappeared ("Aber nichts bleibt"), and instead of glorifying the beauties of nature, the lyrical "Ich" is described as being confronted, as R. Reiners states, with an "unheimliche, fremde Welt,"[82] conveyed in this poem by the use of absurd, alogical and occasionally grotesque imagery.[83]

In the cycle "Bericht vom Neumagen" nature is described as being devoid of any beauty or other consoling characteristics. Once again the impression is given that the lyrical subject is alienated from it. In contrast to the early nature poetry no effort is made here to present the many-sidedness and underlying harmony of the natural sphere by means of a profusion of varied imagery. Rather, it is apparent that the vision of the lyrical subject has become greatly limited. That which is now perceived in nature is a series of unconnected entities from which it is impossible to form a well-rounded image:

> Wenig Aussicht
> Fast gar keine
> Natur beschränkt
> Auf etwas Erdbewegung
> Braune Wellen
> Rebäcker bepflanzt mit Kartoffeln
> Bach[84]

In the sight of the lyrical subject the earth has been transformed into a wasteland, an obscenity, used-up and impotent:

> Sterile Erde
> Träge hingebreitet
> Schlaffbrüstige
> Die schwarzen Schamhaarwälder
> Die dornigen Locken reifbestreut
> Das Kiesgrubenauge verhangen[85]

So bereft of meaning has nature become that it is now regarded with anger and disgust ("Erde mein Ärgernis"), as a series of disjointed, transitory phenomena ("Kommt alles wieder / Ist da / Und geht.") which cannot be regarded as the key to a higher universal order.

The picture which Kaschnitz paints of the modern world in these later works is equally as bleak as that contained in the poems outlined above which deal with the natural sphere. God is shown to be nowhere in sight and, as a result, a state of uneasiness and despair seems to have enveloped the world--"Getränkt mit Unbehagen ist das Erdreich."[86] In many of the poems modern society is depicted in terms of cruelty and violence. Peace is merely a brief interlude between wars, and there is no likelihood whatsoever of its becoming a permanent state:

> Ich lebte in einer Zeit,
> Die hob sich in Wellen
> Kriegauf und kriegab,
> Und das Janusgesicht
> Stieß mit der Panzerfaust
> In die bebänderten Wiegen.[87]

Nightmare visions of the past continually pervade the present and never let man forget the atrocities he once committed:

> Feiertags
> Kommt das Vergessene
> Auf Hahnenfüßen mit Sporen
> Die ritzen mir ins Parkett
> Ein Schnittmuster, so
> Wird uns zugeschnitten
> Das Nesselhemd
> Wenn die Wand
> Rosentapete sich auftut
> Uns ausstößt die Bettlade voll
> Von gemergelten Judenköpfen[88]

The future seems to be as equally terrifying as the past and present combined:

> Finstere Zeiten kommen
> Schiffe segeln durchs Zimmer
> Mit schwarzer Leinwand
> Und schreienden Mästen.
> Maulwurfsgrillen in Pferdsgröße
> Nagen an den Bäumen im Garten
> Aus dem Hinterhalt zarter Skabiosen
> Werden Flammen geworfen.[89]

It would seem impossible to stave off the disaster for which the world is heading:

Weißnoch, weißnoch
Den Vogel Unheil,
Seh ihn noch hocken,
Seh ihn noch hüpfen
Im Käfig über dem Bett uns.

. . . .

Weißnoch, weißnoch,
Wie er sich losriß,
Geierkahl krächzend
Die Sonne verschlang.[90]

Modern man is depicted, however, in certain of these poems as being totally complacent towards or even oblivious of the inhuman degeneracy into which the world has fallen.[91] Only occasionally is he forced out of his comfortable bourgeois milieu and made to suffer pangs of conscience at the gross injustices which are taking place.[92] Other poems stress man's growing materialism and the absence of love in the world.[93] The younger generation, that is, "die Kinder dieser Welt," is also not seen as a source of hope: their attitude, too, towards the world around them is characterised by their callous indifference, blind self-interest and even blatant cruelty.[94] There seems to be no room in this world, Kaschnitz would have us believe, for dreams or "Sehnsucht." These become gradually stifled here and man is forced to live a life in which his innermost hopes and desires are destined to remain unfulfilled.[95] People who have faith in the inherent goodness of man soon have their illusion shattered.[96] Nothing seems to have improved since Ausschwitz and the human race is seen to be fundamentally evil:

> Ich hätte ehe ich gehe
> Noch einige Fragen.
>
> . . . .
>
> Warum haben die Jünger am Ölberg sich schlafend gestellt?
> Warum ist seit Ausschwitz nichts wesentlich besser geworden?
>
> Vom Übel sein.
> Wir sinds.
> Wir sind vom Übel.[97]

The overall impression of human existence conveyed in these poems, therefore, is a pessimistic one. Man is shown to exist in a state of perpetual insecurity: he neither understands the fundamental meaning of life behind all its paradoxes, nor is he able to receive any spiritual consolation from the idea that death will offer any release or salvation. Kaschnitz sums up this situation in the conclusion of the lyrical cycle "Ich lebte":

> Angst zu sterben
> Und Angst zu leben
> Hielten sich die Waage noch immer.
> Natur trug unbekümmert ihr altes Gewand
> Herzzerreißende Schönheit.
> Das Leben war noch immer ein Geheimnis.
> Der Tod ein andres.[98]

The pessimistic tone, the feeling of helplessness, weariness and even resignation contained in the poems discussed above which highlight the discordancy of the world at large are also to be found in those other poems of Neue Gedichte, Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme and Ein Wort weiter which deal with Kaschnitz' own personal situation prior to and after the death of her husband. As has been previously mentioned, even though the lyrical "Ich" of such poems could be readily identified with Kaschnitz herself, it is still perfectly feasible for a reader unfamiliar with the poetess' personal circumstances to understand them on a more objective level. Her lament regarding her own loss can be regarded impersonally as the loss by an "Ich" of a "Du," a situation which is quite prevalent in the modern German poem.[99]

In such "Ich" poems the lyrical subject is often seen to be unable to overcome its sadness and isolation: "Rad Rad im Kopf herum / Mühlrad das aufzieht / Eimerchen voll von Unglück // Wiedergekäut Tag und Nacht / Der Elendsbrei."[100] It is no longer able to find love, has been made spiritually destitute and has therefore become inconsolable: "Und Trost ist nicht, da du mein Trost gewesen / Und Rat ist nicht, da du mein Rat gewesen / Und Schutz ist nicht, da du mein Schutz gewesen / Und Liebe nicht, da ich um deinetwillen / Die Welt geliebt."[101] As a consequence of this, its faith in life has become severely shaken: the outside world appears alien, hostile and needlessly cruel.[102] It has lost any firm goals which it once might have had, as there is nothing left worth striving for: "Treib ich das Rad meines Jahres / Den Rosen zu / Und über den Sommer hinaus / Ins Kartoffelkraut / Und über den Herbst / Eilig / Eilig / Wohin."[103] Occasionally it is forced to admit that it simply no longer understands the necessity of its existence: "Wenn er kommt, der Besucher, / Der Neugierige und dich fragt, / Dann bekenne ihm, daß du keine Briefmarken sammelst, / . . . . / Daß du den Sinn deines Lebens immer noch nicht / Herausgefunden hast, obwohl du schon alt bist."[104]

In summary, therefore, the situation which is prevalent in these three volumes is as follows. The world is presented in a predominantly negative light; neither the sphere of nature nor that of modern civilisation seems to be a part of an orderly cosmos; man is seen as being inherently evil, and he stands uncomprehendingly before the chaotic amorphousness of existence. The feeling of helplessness which results from this is compounded by the fact that the lyrical "Ich" itself is also often seen to be as equally perplexed and pessimistic regarding the state of the world and its own position within it.

As in Kaschnitz' first four volumes of poetry, however, a mood of despair does not completely gain the upper hand. In the later poems she also endeavours to draw attention to the more positive forces which are present in life, but here the notes of consolation become manifestly subdued or veiled.

Such poems which offer some kind of "Trost" or hope are more discernible in the collections Neue Gedichte and Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme than they are in Ein Wort weiter for reasons which will be later suggested. In the first two volumes certain of the poems offer religious consolation by showing that although the world is at present in a state of chaos and that Christian values are largely ignored in favour of a materialistic attitude, God is still the controlling power of existence and all that which Christ symbolises can never be completely annihilated.[105] Other poems stress that, even though everything in life appears to be meaningless and transitory, there are still phenomena which are permanent and of lasting value, such as the beauty of an ancient temple.[106] No matter how much to the contrary it would appear, they affirm that love does exist in a seemingly loveless world,[107] and that, on fleeting occasions at least, it is possible to become aware of a secret order to which all things are subject.[108] Kaschnitz also expresses the idea in two poems that human suffering and defeat need not necessarily lead to the total destruction of the human spirit, but rather that these conditions could eventually mark the way to inner peace and act as the impetus for greater awareness of the self and the surrounding world.[109]

In conjunction with the aforementioned poems are others in which the lyrical "Ich" makes it apparent that despite the chaos of the world and its own feelings of confusion and helplessness as a result it will not capitulate. In continual variation such poems show how it is possible to exist in an alien, hostile world and even to recognise its value. Thus, the subject of these poems insists on squarely facing the world, including its negative sides, in the hope that such positive elements as love and beauty may be uncovered.[110] Even though it has been severely tested by life and brought almost to the brink of defeat, it still has the resilience to persevere and be productive:

Erfahrung die mich lahm geschlagen hat
Erinnerung die mir die Luft verpestet
Ahnungen fratzengesichtig
Brustreitende Träume.
Und doch mein Finger wie Glyzinien knospend
Und doch ein Bienenschwarm aus meinen Augen
Der höher steigt als die schwarzen Menhire des Parks.[111]

Thus far, therefore, a basic thematical pattern in the collections Neue Gedichte, Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme and Ein Wort weiter has been made discernible. Most of the poems dwell upon the gloomier, more destructive aspects of existence: the unintelligible fragmentation of the world, man's callousness and cruelty, and the resulting moods of frustration, helplessness and despair of the lyrical "Ich." Others, however, prevent a fall into complete despondency by showing that there are present positive aspects to existence, although these are greatly concealed, and that there is hope that the individual can resist the more negative forces. In the volume Ein Wort weiter, however, the difficulties of providing hope and consolation seem to have become almost overwhelming. The title itself is taken from the following lines in the cycle "Bericht vom Neumagen" and may be regarded as a declaration by Kaschnitz of the programmatic intent of the whole work:

Halte nicht ein bei der Schmerzgrenze
Halte nicht ein
Geh ein Wort weiter
Einen Atemzug
Noch über dich hinaus
Greif dir im Leeren
Die Osterblume

Wenn das Maisstroh fragt
Das Junilaub wird Antwort geben
Die Vögel mondvorüber sind am Ziel.[112]

This excerpt constitutes a plea by the poetess that she not give in to the pain and confusion caused by the cruelty and chaos of existence, but to persist practically beyond the threshold of endurance in the hope that something tangible will be perceived--"Greif dir im Leeren / Die Osterblume"--and that an underlying order might be discerned, symbolised in the last three lines by the secret language of nature and the image of the birds reaching their goal. Seen in a poetological light these lines imply that the poems of this collection constitute a final attempt to overcome the likelihood of speechlessness caused by the knowledge that it has become almost an impossibility for them to achieve their aim of outlining the fundamentally positive aspects of life. They are poems which express a determination to go "one word further" in pursuance of their goal, even if reality seems to have become so chaotic and unintelligible, that its apparent order has disintegrated to such a degree, that it is only barely feasible to understand and come to terms with it.

Despite Kaschnitz' resolve, however, to further her poetic aims in this volume, the notes of consolation and hope, already on the wane in Neue Gedichte and Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme, become diminished even further. Mostly the chaotic and fragmentary character of existence, behind which no order can be detected, are emphasised, and the helplessness of the lyrical "Ich" trying to locate itself in reality, already given poignant expression in the preceding two volumes, reaches a climax. As a result of this certain of the poems evince an attitude of resignation and defeat: Kaschnitz begins to question the validity of her poetry as an instrument for furnishing a better understanding of reality and as a medium for providing a certain existential optimism. In turn, this dilemma has a direct effect on her poetry: it becomes threatened with speechlessness upon the realisation that it cannot adequately fulfil any of its objectives. The occurrence of poetological scepticism and the accompanying danger of "Verstummen" will be discussed in the next section.

ii) Poetological Scepticism and the Tendency towards Speechlessness.

Kaschnitz endeavours in her poetry, as has been shown, to highlight the creative forces of life, its inherent value, even if these appear to have been extinguished. It was seen how the earlier poems constantly strove to create a feeling of "Versöhnung und Harmonie" in a seemingly godless and degenerate world and how the later poems with their even greater emphasis on the more pernicious elements of existence attempt to carry out this task also, although, as was stated, the struggle to do so becomes increasingly difficult and problematical.

In the course of her poetic development, however, Kaschnitz became beset with a profound scepticism concerning the effectiveness of her own work in particular and art and literature in general in the modern world. She frequently used her "Aufzeichnungen" as a vehicle to express her doubts.

Here, she points out that poetry today is largely ignored: "Das Wort der Dichter ist ein von der Jetztzeit beinahe Preisgegebenes."[113] Contemporary civilisation, she maintains, has become so attuned to factual mass information that artistic creation is scorned or doomed to instant obsolescence: "Bei öffentlichen Veranstaltungen werden statt Gedichten Auszüge aus dem Telefonbuch vorgelesen, zum Beispiel der Abschnitt A - B."[114] She also voices the opinion that art, when it tries to function as a protest against society and as a means of pointing the way to a better world, has become, ever since the seeds of political totalitarianism were sown in Germany by National Socialism, absolutely powerless to change the course of historical events: ". . . der Nationalsozialismus (hat) etwas vorweggenommen, was später wiederkommen sollte, international, ja global, die Auffassung . . . von der Überflüssigkeit der formalistischen, der bürgerlichen Kunst."[115]

This mood of scepticism as to the value and function of art in Society is shared, Kaschnitz states, by a wide variety of other artists who themselves have expressed a lack of confidence in the nature and intent of their own works. She refers to Picasso and Chirico who openly condemned their works and/or led others to believe that their artistic production was based on a lie, that it was "Gaukelei . . . Lug und Trug."[116] Tolstoy and Thomas Mann, she points out further, also came to regard their works, despite the seriousness of their original intent, as being founded on an illusion or trickery, as being merely a light-hearted game without any claim whatsoever to be a statement of truth regarding the human condition. In addition, Kaschnitz also cites the case of Gerald Manley Hopkins who suddenly, practically without warning, stopped writing poetry out of the conviction "daß dem beredten Gaukelspiel des Künstlers das große Schweigen als etwas Gleichwertiges und - durch eine stille Kommunikation - im Grunde Wirksameres entgegenzusetzen wäre."[117] This idea that it is better for an artist to remain silent rather than continue to be creative in the full knowledge that that which he produces is merely an irrelevant swindle or completely lacks validity is likewise echoed, as will later be seen, in one of Kaschnitz' own poems. As will become clear, however, she never does completely fall silent, despite the temptations to do so. Rather, the idea of poetical "silence," that is, the refusal to continue writing poetry, is merely discussed in her works as a possibility.

In addition to this overall picture of scepticism regarding the value and function of modern art and literature as a whole and the dangers, or even advantages of "Schweigen" upon the realisation that artistic expression does not really fulfil its aims, Kaschnitz also on several occasions in her "Aufzeichnungen" shows scepticism towards her own poetry and its effectiveness. She voices doubts as to the validity of her works as a means of bringing about an "improvement" in the world. These reservations, as she confesses, threatened to extinguish her own literary creativity: ". . . man machte so weiter, erhitzte sich immer noch an Formproblemen, aber mit mattem Feuer, ohne rechte Überzeugung, daß die angestrebte kleine Vollkommenheit noch etwas galt."[118] She suggests that she, too, has taken part in the same artistic "swindle" as the artists mentioned earlier who began to think that the basic theoretical tenets of their works were spurious: ". . . ich weiß zu gut, daß ich zwar meiner Zeit, den Mitlebenden etwas vermittelt habe, daß ich aber im Kreise von Unsterblichen nur die fragwürdige Rolle eines Hochstaplers wider Willen spielen kann."[119] She is also forcefully critical of the idea that her works in particular, and literature as a whole, have a beneficial effect in that they can bring about moral edification or evoke the presence of "das Schöne" in a world where it has all but disappeared:

> (wir) glauben nicht mehr an die Heilung durch das Wort, die Heilung durch den Geist . . . jetzt (gilt) nichts mehr, nicht unsere geduldige Bemühung um eine Zeile, um ein Wort, um den Klang eines Vokals, und doch bäumen wir uns auf, warum eigentlich nicht, die Kunst ist ewig, die Kunst kann nicht untergehen, so haben wir es gelernt. Wir haben aber noch manches andere gelernt, zum Beispiel, daß der Mensch gut ist und der liebe Gott auf ihn aufpasst und daß der Soldat ein Soldat und der Zivilist ein Zivilist ist, lauter Anschauungen, die wir im Ernst nicht mehr vertreten können, und das Schöne stirbt uns unter der schreibenden Hand.[120]

This poetological scepticism on the part of Kaschnitz, which is the direct result of her suspicion that poetry is relatively ineffectual in the modern world and is in danger of being rendered extinct, as well as the notion that to fall silent would be a better alternative, also becomes thematic in certain of her poems. On the one hand her poetry constantly strives to accomplish its goals, whereas on the other it seems to negate its very existence.

Even in the early volume Gedichte (1947) the figure of the poet, admittedly regarded in this instance in a somewhat old-fashioned, romantic light, is seen to be threatened with obsolescence as a result of the accelerated development of a technical, materialistic world:

> Wunderlich ist's mir im Herzen und traurig zumute
> Da ich das Neue gewahre. Denn einsamer immer
> Bleibt in geordneter Welt und verloren der Dichter
> Da er sich Wälder erträumet und Land ohne Grenzen
> Wegloses Schreiten ins Ferne und nächtlich die Schauer
> Fremder Gewalten um seine Sterne zu wehen.[121]

It is not until the later volumes Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme and Ein Wort weiter, however, that Kaschnitz expresses the fear that her own poetry with its prime function of providing solace has become anachronistic and even superfluous. As a result, she demonstrates a disillusioned and sceptical attitude towards it. She begins to write poems about her own poetic production. Such "metapoems" are also present in the works of the other poets dealt with in this study. In all cases they seem to occur whenever the difficulties of a particular poetic undertaking appear to be all but insurmountable and when an end-stage is imminent or has already been reached. Thus, in Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme the poem entitled "Gloria" has as its theme the virtual impossibility of poetry's being able to find anything positive to say about the world, and therefore postulates its fall into speechlessness:

In der Kammer schlafen
Die Instrumente
Goldglühende
Ebenholzschwarze
Unter staubigem Samt
Und die Träume

Ein Gedicht erfinden
Die Worte ins Feuer blasen.
Musik aufschreiben
Die Noten zerkauen
Schluck unter, Häftling.
Lautlos sprechen
Tonlos singen
Wir das kalte Gloria.[122]

The poem "Anders" from the same volume expresses a similar theme, but, as is typical for Kaschnitz, she refuses in the final instance to adopt an attitude to total capitulation:

Wer endete seine Musik
Noch mit vollem Akkord
Oder gar mit Posaunen?

Wir haben gesungen
Die Katze hat uns eingeholt.
Jetzt singen wir wieder
Sagen noch manchmal
Du Meer
Du Liebe
Aber anders
Mit kleinerem Atem.[123]

Here she states in veiled terms that her attempts through poetry to create an awareness of beauty, of that which is permanent, of love, now seem out of place during a historic point of time where such values are largely ignored. She even denigrates or ridicules such poetry by inferring that it has less value than a bothersome caterwauling. Although in actual fact Kaschnitz never completely ceases in her later poetry to confirm the existence of life's lasting beneficial qualities--indeed, the excerpts just quoted programmatically state that she will not do so, but rather, by necessity, they will not be quite so loudly proclaimed--these two poems tend to cast doubt on the validity of such an enterprise. They show that Kaschnitz herself is confronted with the thought that it is hardly feasible for her to further her literary aims and is consequently faced with the possibility of artistic failure and thus speechlessness.

It is in the volume Ein Wort weiter, however, that Kaschnitz appears to be at her most poetologically sceptical and self-deprecatory. She expresses doubts, for example, as to whether the message which her poetry is trying to convey is finding an adequate reading public, doubts which, by implication, question the effectiveness of her work:

> Wir schreiben auf die Kuhhaut
> Mehr als auf die Kuhhaut geht
> Wer soll es lesen?
> Fünf Dollar für den der noch unsere Sprache versteht
> Für das Anhören eines Gedichts.[124]

She also categorically states that her entire poetic endeavours have been, and are still, of spurious validity:

Mir aufgelauert entdeckt
Die Blüten Falschgeld
Die ich unter die Leute bringe
Und die falschen Papiere
Mit denen ich reise
Und das falsche Zeugnis
Das ich ablege ehe
Der Morgen kräht

Und das falsche Spiel
Das ich treibe
Mit wem
Mit mir

Rotwelsch entziffert
Letzthin
Im Jahr der ruhigen Sonne
Blutsenkung erhöht
Und gewußt
Es ist Zeit für Demut.[125]

This poem constitutes an admission by Kaschnitz that the ideas which her poetry have put across are essentially false. It implies that her fundamental belief in a harmony which underlies existence was the result of her own blind naivety, and, as a consequence, the mood of hope which it was her poetry's basic task to perpetuate is now regarded merely as deceit, "Falschgeld," "ein falsches Spiel," "ein falsches Zeugnis." It is this knowledge that provokes her to call for an attitude of self-modesty: she implies that it was sheer arrogance for her to suppose that her understanding of the world with its inherent conviction of life's positive value was of unquestionable validity.

With this poem, therefore, Kaschnitz seems to have fallen into that state of existential pessimism which she had always endeavoured to stave off by means of her poetry. What is more, it puts into question the very basis and purpose of her entire poetic production: it suggests that it is without value, that its existence cannot be justified.

This mood of crass scepticism regarding the worth of her own poetry is brought to a logical conclusion in the poem entitled "Schluß":

Dein Gedicht
Schlag es dir in den Hals
Bring dich zum Schweigen

Wenn du redest geht dir nicht ein
Was die andern zu sagen haben

Das Ohneich
Das Ohnedu
Das Ohnewann
Das Ohnewo

Die Maschine
In der man es manchmal
Knirschen hört

Schluchzen nicht mehr.
Nur die Handvoll Mensch im Getriebe.

Schweig.[126]

Here Kaschnitz is expressly putting forward the idea that it is preferable for her to fall silent rather than to continue writing poetry. The reason given for such a drastic measure is that she has come to believe that her poetry, one of whose aims it is to present an unequivocal depiction of reality, seems to have lost contact with the plight of man in the modern world. This would imply that it is so full of her personal idealistic "Weltanschauung" that it no longer gets to grips with the essential nature of the human condition: man's isolation, "Das Ohneich, das Ohnedu," his disorientation and lack of fixed roots, "Das Ohnewann, das Ohnewo," his having been ground down, as it were, in the anonymous "machine" of society, and his passive acceptance of this, "Die Maschine / In der man es manchmal / Knirschen hört / (aber das) Schluchzen nicht mehr." Seen in conjunction with the poem "Demut" just previously discussed Kaschnitz is also implying here that her attempts to provide moral edification or consolation are totally without value and that it would be better for her to give them up as they are simply not commensurate to the harsh nature of reality. Thus, the poem ends with the command to fall silent.

It will be noticed that concurrent to the expression of this thought the poem itself begins in the fourth and fifth stanzas to disintegrate syntactically. The language of the poem is on the verge of becoming a paratactical stammering, and thus graphically depicts its own descent into speechlessness. This phenomenon of stylistic disintegration as being indicative of the state of impending poetic speechlessness will be discussed more fully at a later stage: it first manifests itself in the _Neue Gedichte_ and becomes more prevalent in _Ein Wort weiter_.

Although Kaschnitz never does completely give up her attempts through poetry to show that life does indeed have a positive side or that it is possible to resist, if only with difficulty, the cruelty and degeneracy of the world, the poems quoted above tend to cast doubt upon the whole undertaking. They show that the poetess herself wavers in her belief in the purpose and value of her own poetic production. This, in turn, brings with it the threat of poetic speechlessness: the act of writing poetry only seems to demonstrate its own futility, therefore there can be no point in continuing.

The onset of impending poetic speechlessness, however, has with Kaschnitz yet another cause other than the fundamental undermining of the conceptual and theoretical tenets of her poetry as discussed above. A second main reason for the imminent disintegration of her poetry is the fact that as reality has become in her eyes increasingly unintelligible and practically devoid of any tangible meaning, the more difficult it becomes for the poem to describe it.

In certain of Kaschnitz' poems the danger of speechlessness before the chaos of reality becomes thematic. In the "Tutzinger Gedichtkreis" from the Neue Gedichte, for example, the idea is expressed that man himself has been forced into a state of benumbed silence as a result of the recognition that he seems to have been deserted by God and that the world in which he lives is characterised by its cruelty and indifferent arbitrariness:

> . . . Tränenlos
> Lehnen wir steif an der Schwelle der Totenbetten,
> Kein Zucken des Mundes mehr für die enttäuschte Hoffnung,
> Kein Schluchzen mehr für die verlorene Heimat.[127]

In "Zoon Politikon" from Ein Wort weiter it is stated that the cruelty which has taken place in the world cannot be described by means of the written word:

> Alles nicht aktenkundig
> Nicht der Angstschrei im Bahnhofsgelände
> Nicht das Schluchzen gefangener Kinder
> Unterm Kanalgitter[128]

It is even suggested in the cycle "Ich lebte" from Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme that in the present age as a whole verbal communication has become almost impossible as a consequence of man's inability to come to terms with and understand his existence:

> Immer wollte sie (meine Zeit) mit der Sprache heraus,
> Die verzerrte sich ihr im Munde
> Überkam uns ein Zanken
> Stymphalischer Vögel
> Ein Gelächter von Geistern.[129]

Kaschnitz also discusses in several of her poems the possibility that poetry can become speechless because it cannot adequately describe either the chaos or the cruelty of the world. This idea already finds expression in the early Gedichte:

> Und selbst das Wort. Der Dichter Lob und Klage,
> Des Geistes unermüdliche Erhebung,
> Es tönt nicht mehr im dumpfen Gang der Tage,
> Und spottet der unsäglichen Beschreibung.[130]

It is continued also in the poem entitled "Zuweilen" from the collection Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme:

> Zuweilen schläft auch der Dichter
> Der alte Verderber der Feste
> Ausgezählt hat er sich selber
> Gesunken ins Sterntalergras.

Schnellwachsender Traum überspinnt ihm
Die spähenden Augen
Auf seiner Schreibhand
Begatten sich Schmetterlinge
Seine Sturmvögel plappern wie Spatzen
Das liebliche Immer-schon-da.[131]

Recorded here is the capitulation of the poet before his function of describing reality. He is called "der alte Verderber der Feste" because, in Kaschnitz' view, it is impossible for him in this day and age to soothe his audience, so to speak, with visions of harmony but rather, to the contrary, his portrayal of reality, if it is to be a truthful one, can only serve to disturb them. However, the poem puts forward the idea that occasionally the poet is not equal to this task: he ceases writing, closes himself off from the outside world and flees into a private dream-world. Only here, after a deliberate end has been put to all literary activity, can he find inner peace.

Not only does Kaschnitz describe in general terms the threat of speechlessness before reality as was seen in the examples quoted above: she also begins in certain of her later poems to introduce the theme of the "Verstummen" of her own poetry and the difficulties which it has in its attempts to portray the every-day world. The Neue Gedichte, for example, contains a direct admission by the poetess that the writing of poetry has become an almost impossible task because no coherence can be discerned amidst the fragmentation of reality:

Lang ist die Zeit, da wir uns keinen Vers machen können
Da die geheimnisvolle Entsprechung mißlingt.[132]

In Ein Wort weiter this topic becomes most forcefully presented. The section entitled "In eigener Sache" contains poems which directly refer to Kaschnitz' own personal position: two of them deal directly with her experience of poetic speechlessness. "Der Dichter," the first stanza of which is quoted here, has as its theme the inability of the poet to continue being artistically productive:

Vogelbauer viele
An meinen Wänden
Geschrieben steht
Pirol und Nachtigall
Mit dem Fuß stampf ich auf
Befehle
Singt, meine Träume.
Aber kein Flügel leuchtet
Kein Kreuzschnabel
Wetzt am Gitter.[133]

The poem "Nicht gesagt" expresses a similar idea, but even more emphatically and with greater detail:

Nicht gesagt
Was von der Sonne zu sagen gewesen wäre
Und vom Blitz nicht das einzig richtige
Geschweige denn von der Liebe.

Versuche. Gesuche. Mißlungen
Ungenaue Beschreibung.

Weggelassen das Morgenrot
Nicht gesprochen vom Sämann
Und nur am Rande vermerkt
Den Hahnenfuß und das Veilchen.

Euch nicht den Rücken gestärkt
Mit ewiger Seligkeit
Den Verfall nicht geleugnet
Und nicht die Verzweiflung

Den Teufel nicht an die Wand
Weil ich nicht an ihn glaube
Gott nicht gelobt
Aber wer bin ich daß[134]

The central theme of this poem is the inability of the poet to make lasting valid statements about reality. All attempts to describe it objectively or even to point out its positive sides, alluded to in the fourth line by the word "Liebe" and also in the first two lines in stanza four, have failed. Poetry is not capable of giving expression to the true nature of reality and thus has been forced by necessity to leave it "unsaid." The implied reason for this is that it is no longer possible for the poet to discern any coherent order through the chaos: in the final stanza it is even indicated that the difference between Good and Evil has become so blurred that it is no longer feasible to believe in the existence of God and the Devil as separate entities. As a result of the poet's failure to understand reality poetry is considered to be "ungenaue Beschreibung." It has the tendency to give up its attempts to create insight into some comprehensive world pattern upon the reocgnition of the futility of such an enterprise. The image of reality which it presents is more likely to be negative ("Verfall," "Verzweiflung,") rather than positive ("Euch nicht den Rücken gestärkt / Mit ewiger Seligkeit").

The admission contained here that the poet stands uncomprehending and helpless before reality and the resulting inference that poetry can serve no useful purpose, that it is redundant, are accompanied once again by syntactical disintegration. This phenomenon first appears in the third line, "Und vom Blitz nicht das einzig richtige,"[135] and occurs again in the last stanza, "Den Teufel nicht an die Wand / Weil ich nicht an ihn glaube." The whole poem itself finally breaks off and graphically lapses into speechlessness, leaving the lyrical subject's confession that it simply does not have the capability to understand reality, let alone describe it, unsaid.

In the "metapoems" discussed above, therefore, Kaschnitz indicates the possibility of the disintegration or speechlessness of her own poetry. It was shown that the reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, she comes to the realisation that her poetry has failed in its basic mission of pointing out, even if only indirectly, the inherent values of life: the attempt to provide some kind of spiritual consolation at the present time seems destined for defeat. Secondly, reality has become so intangible that it is virtually impossible to describe it or to come to terms with it through the medium of poetry: indeed, Kaschnitz implies that it is sheer pretentiousness on the part of the poet to believe that he can do so--"Aber wer bin ich daß."

Basically, however, these two reasons are not separable: the latter is primarily the cause of the former. The disintegration and unintelligibility of reality, its overwhelmingly negative aspects, make it all but impossible for poetry to point out its positive side and therefore to provide moral consolation. In this way the disintegration of reality as such is the one main cause of the threatened disintegration of Kaschnitz' poetry.

Poetic "speechlessness" does not only occur in Kaschnitz' lyric as an objectively presented theme. Two of the poems analysed above were shown to be actually on the verge of "Verstummen," graphically conveyed by an elliptical, faltering style, when they tried to describe the hopelessness of the poet's position on being faced with the knowledge that poetry cannot fulfil its desired aims. This phenomenon is by no means isolated in Kaschnitz' poetry from the volume Neue Gedichte onwards: it becomes apparent in certain other of the later poems which attempt to describe the nature of reality and/or to provide "Trost" by pointing the way to the more positive sides of existence. It now remains to illustrate more fully this tendency towards stylistic disintegration.

4. Stylistic Manifestation of Poetic Speechlessness.

Already in the volume Neue Gedichte certain of the poems tend to stumble stylistically or even break off completely in a gesture of speechlessness when they attempt to describe a certain facet of reality. In the poems "Bräutigam Froschkönig" and "Liebe Sonne,"[136] for example, the syntax becomes momentarily disturbed by the use of aposiopesis, a device which, because it causes a breakdown in communication, suggests a lapse into speechlessness.[137]

The first of these poems consists of a depiction of the "bridegroom" of "Jungfrau Leben," that is, presumably, of man himself. He is described in terms of violence, "Eine Rüsselmaske sein Antlitz / Eine Patronentasche sein Gürtel / Ein Flammenwerfer / Seine Hand," and as a creature who only seeks to understand life and gain intimate contact with it when he is not actively engaged in destruction: "Zwischen zwei / Weltuntergängen / Preßt er sich / In Deinen Schoß." In the last two stanzas, however, an effort is made to see man in a more creditable, understanding light. Because of the extreme difficulty of doing this the penultimate stanza disintegrates into speechlessness, signalled by the disintegration of the syntax.

Im Morgengrauen
Nur im Morgengrauen
Nur im

Erblickst Du seine
Traurigen
Schönen
Augen.[138]

Thus the poem almost dissipates into a fragment as a result of the fact that it is hardly possible for it to envisage the more positive side of man's character when its malevolence is so predominant.

The second poem also breaks off, this time in the first stanza, as it is describing a nihilistic attitude towards life:

Wir glauben an diese
Unsere große
Freiheit zu sterben
Häuser unsere
Einstürzen zu lassen
Weingärten unsere
Brach -

In both these poems the lapse into speechlessness is only temporary. After its occurrence they succeed in bringing their respective themes to a conclusion. One poem of the Neue Gedichte, however, actually ends on a note of speechlessness and thus leaves a final impression of being an incomplete fragment:

"Ostia antica"

Durch die Tore: niemand
Treppen: fort ins Blau
Auf dem Estrich: Thymian
Auf den Tischen: Tau.
Zwiegespräch aus Stille
Tod aus Käferzug
Abendrot im Teller
Asche im Krug.
Asphodeloswiese
Fledermäusekreis
Diesseits oder drüben
Wer das weiß - [139]

No attempt is made in this poem to present the segment of reality to be portrayed in a logical order which can be immediately understood by a reader. Rather, as Dorothea Ader makes clear, the poem consists of a catalogue of impressions which, because of the lack of finite verbs, remain unconnected.[140] No well-rounded description is given because no orderly coherence can be discerned. So intangible has reality become that it seems neither to belong to this world ("diesseits") nor to some other ("drüben"). Indeed, the impression is gained that it consists of a blurred combination of the two, before which an observer stands totally alienated. As a consequence of this atmosphere of estrangement the poem finally ceases to continue describing the scene. The last two lines--"Diesseits oder drüben / Wer das weiß -"--are neither a question nor a complete statement. Thus, the poem ends on a note of indecision; it is incomplete. It lapses into a state of speechlessness where the reader would expect a continuation of its theme.

In the poems from the Neue Gedichte outlined above, therefore, the threat of poetic disintegration occurs when it becomes apparent that the themes with which they deal lie beyond the scope of the written word. The impression is given that the first two examples come to a temporary halt because their subject matter, which treats mainly the more negative sides of reality, seems too painful to be given articulation. In the third example the dissipation into "Verstummen" is caused by the recognition that it is no longer possible to get to grips adequately with the incoherent nature of reality.

The volume Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme does not contain such obvious examples of poetical disintegration. The very title of the work, which Kaschnitz intended as a personal dedication to the memory of her late husband, precludes the possibility of the dangers of speechlessness being realised. In Ein Wort weiter, however, where the struggle to accomplish the poetic task becomes acutely difficult, there are more poems which graphically demonstrate the descent into benumbed silence, or the imminency thereof, when they endeavour to depict an aspect of reality. This is best illustrated by means of selected examples.

The poem "Landwirtschaft"[141] aims to describe the desecration of nature brought about by the advancement of technical progress which strives to utilitarianise all natural phenomena. In the excerpt quoted here the language of the poem begins to stumble because of the difficulties of expressing this theme. This gives rise to the impression that the poem itself is almost unable to continue describing the devastation of the natural world which has taken place:

> Einiges noch von dem neuen Drahtzaun
> Einschließend
> Jungstämme Glockenapfel
> Golden delicious
> In saubere Rhomboide
> Milchig blaue
> Der Schuttabladeplatz ist eingeebnet
> Für die kranken Linden wird viel getan.
>
> Von der Friedhofsmauer sieh nicht
> Nicht sieh nicht
> Talüber nach Westen
> Sieh den Kahlhieb nicht
> Wälder der Kindheit sind auch
> Nicht für ewig gemacht
> Ziemlich späte Erfahrung.[142]

Here, therefore, it is a destructive aspect of reality which almost forces the poem in the second stanza above to come to a halt.

Perhaps the most striking example of poetic speechlessness contained in Ein Wort weiter is the poem entitled "Die Länder die Meere," quoted here in full:

> Noch einmal ins Auge gefaßt
> Alles in mich hinab
> Unter die Schattenlinie
> Gesunkene gestern vorgestern vor
> Schlafende Griechin
> Salzüberkrusteter Stein.

Keine Trennschärfe mehr.
Gleich neben Aarhus liegt Kairouan
Die riesigen Möwen auf den Minen von Letzte Platane
Heute sah ich sie wieder
Sie mischten sich
Unter die fetten Tauben vom Odeonsplatz
Fraßen hausbackene Körner.

Seit einigen Tagen hinke ich
Das macht
Mein einer Fuß ist aus Marmor
Akanthusblatt überwächst ihn
Der andere geht und geht.
Auf den Schultern trag ich
Das leichte gerettete
Vorsichtig
Seht weg.[143]

The beginning of the poem describes an attempt by the lyrical subject to envisage within the mind's eye places and scenes once visited. The impression is given by the words "Noch einmal ins Auge gefaßt" that this attempt is the final one of a series of many: it is as if the lyrical subject is trying to make yet another concerted effort to recall and describe its memories.

In the first stanza, however, it is intimated that the lyrical "Ich" has lost all track of past time. It is unable to fit its memories into the context of time and thus the past seems to ceaselessly flow backwards, as it were, without there being any precise distinction between definite temporal periods. As a result the fourth line, ". . . gestern vorgestern vor," suddenly breaks off as the "Ich," on becoming aware of its temporal disorientation, gives up trying to recall the passage of past time. The two entities which it now encounters from the past, ("schlafende Griechin," "salzüberkrusteter Stein"), are seen in isolation, outside the context of time.

In the second stanza it becomes apparent that the lyrical subject is also suffering from spatial disorientation. It is unable to distinguish between the places and things once visited, "Keine Trennschärfe mehr," and so the towns of Aarhus in Denmark and Kairouan in Tunisia appear to be situated adjacent to each other and "die riesigen Möwen" of "Letzte Platane" seem to be intermingled with the pigeons of the Odeon Square.

The first two stanzas of the poem, whose prime goal it was to piece together certain facets of reality, merely end up by documenting the failure of the lyrical subject to see any coherent order in this reality, which, in its eyes, has become completely fragmented and distorted.

The final stanza itself is a disjointed, barely intelligible fragment. Here the "Ich" seems to have renounced its attempts to order and set down its memories and appears to describe its own feeling of helplessness, suggested by the verb "hinken," *vis-à-vis* reality in general. The second line once again breaks off, and thus graphically illustrates the fact that the perceptive faculties and mental thought processes of the lyrical subject are confused and unable to grasp that which the poem is trying to describe. The absurdity of its position, that its mind cannot grasp the desired reality, that it "limps," is conveyed by the use of absurd, grotesque imagery: "Mein einer Fuß ist aus Marmor / Akanthusblatt überwächst ihn / Der andere geht und geht." In the next three lines the "Ich" endeavours to continue to describe its position, but, as the elliptical, faltering syntax suggests, it is unable to do so. The stanza dissipates into a paratactical stammering and, as a consequence, becomes ambivalent: one cannot be sure whether the word "vorsichtig" has been purposely given a substantival quality or if it is meant as some kind of warning to the lyrical subject as it cautions itself to give up any further efforts to describe its position when faced with the impossibility of such an undertaking. The final line of the stanza seems to be directly addressed to readers of the poem, and implies that they should no longer have to bear witness to this example of overwhelming poetic failure.[144] If this be so, the previous "vorsichtig" could also be understood as being directed to the readers, in which case the words "seht weg" may be taken to be an appended afterthought which reinforces the warning.

This example, therefore, clearly shows that the disintegration of reality can lead to the disintegration of poetry. The poem itself is unable to present any order in the sphere of experience with which it is confronted, and so, at best, all that it can do is to reproduce the fragmentary impressions which seem to constitute the essential nature of that sphere. As was mentioned earlier, many of Kaschnitz' later poems take on a fragmented character. In the most extreme cases as in the poem quoted above, such fragmentation can lead to the eventual breakdown of the poem into speechlessness upon the realisation that it is unable to make meaningful statements about reality but can only reproduce its incoherence.

The poems outlined above which manifest in one form or another the phenomenon of poetic speechlessness all deal with specific aspects of empirical reality. In contrast to this Kaschnitz turns her attention in the poem "Jenseits"[145] from the collection Ein Wort weiter to the non-empirical sphere, namely to "heaven" in the religious sense, in order to describe its qualities and thereby discern if it would be possible to uncover here any notes of consolation or hope which could prevent a fall into an attitude of pessimism. Even this however, leads to a state of poetic speechlessness.

The cycle consists of six individual poems, each of which tries to describe the nature of the "Jenseits." In the first poem the tone is predominantly humorous. A series of evocations is presented as to how heaven might appear: "Wie sie aussehen werden die Engel / Vielleicht wie Krähen?" "Auf keinen Fall werden dort sein / Ausschließlich Bischöfe," "Vielleicht auch umarmen sich Knochengerüste / Röntgenhände spielen mit Röntgenhänden / (Man sieht noch die Ringe)." At the same time it is petulantly admitted that it is impossible to obtain an accurate picture, "Aber wer kann das noch denken / Aus - denken / Verdammt," and that the whole undertaking resembles a game of blind man's buff: "Blind blindlings Blindekuh / Und Kopf im Sack."

The second poem postulates the presence of "Liebe" in the "Jenseits," but then, instead of a continuation of this thought, there follows a lament concerning the inadequacy of language which prevents an accurate description of that which is intangible: "Alles wie etwas / Immer Vergleiche / Immer Zusammengereimtes / Honigsee / Jaspisgebirge / Gottvater / Aber dem nichts / Vergleichbaren."

In the next two sections the attempts to express the inexpressible continue and once more these end in failure. The use of parataxis and aposiopesis signal yet again the approach of speechlessness until finally a direct admission is made that the lyrical subject has been forced into a state of silence as a result of its inability to master its subject matter in appropriate language:

> Eintöniger Fall über Fall
> Vergessene Wiederkehr
> Zuversicht letzte,
> Aus uns wird das Schweigen gemacht.
> Bedenket die Gnade:
> Das Schweigen.

The act of falling silent is regarded here not so much as a fault but rather as a virtue. This would seem to be a continuation of Kaschnitz' idea discussed earlier that it is better for poetry to fall silent rather than to carry on in the full knowledge that it cannot possibly achieve its aims. This thought having been expressed, however, the poem, or rather its lyrical subject, refuses to succumb entirely to the state of speechlessness and the fifth section renews the attempt to envisage the intangible nature of the "Jenseits." This time a measure of success is achieved: the other realm is seen to be a place of joy, "adamische Zuversicht," and hope. In the concluding poem the lyrical subject is described as having finally attained a language, a language of love, which has the capacity of evoking the true nature of heaven. The last stanza, however, although it exultantly proclaims the lyrical subject's conception of the "Jenseits" as being a place of absolute freedom, also casts doubt as to the validity of this insight by dint of the fact that the syntax begins to falter and eventually ends in a gesture of speechlessness:

> Denn wir wußtens ja, wußten es immer
> Wo Freiheit wohnte. Blind blindlings
> Wußten wirs hin-
> Gestürzt an die atmende Brust
> Was da sein wird
> Im Jen.

This breaking off of the last word seems to negate completely that which had been immediately said in the main body of the stanza. It is as if the previous insights concerning the more positive aspects of the "Jenseits" seem suddenly to lack credibility and so the poem refuses to round them off, to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion, and thus lapses into silence.

The whole cycle, therefore, ultimately fails in its aim to gain definitive insight into the "Jenseits" and thereby uncover elements which might offer spiritual hope. Four of the individual poems successively give up their attempts to proceed with their task and the lyrical subject is eventually forced to admit that a state of speechlessness has been reached. Instead of this marking an end-stage, however, the cycle continues and succeeds in pointing out the more positive aspects of the "Jenseits," only in the final instance to become speechless once more and thus cast doubt on the value of that which has been perceived.

It has already been seen by means of selected examples that Kaschnitz' later poetry frequently encounters considerable difficulties when endeavouring to describe the nature of empirical reality and to create awareness of its inherently positive aspects. The cycle "Jenseits" also shows the impracticability of the poetess' efforts to describe the non-empirical sphere, the place where, ironically enough, the more positive aspects of existence would most likely be found.

In an interview with Horst Bieneck in 1961 Kaschnitz denied the possibility that her lyric could ultimately fall silent, maintaining that, as opposed to younger poets such as Paul Celan, she belonged to a "geschwätzigeren Generation."[147] As Otto Knörrich points out, however, despite this conviction Kaschnitz does reach in Ein Wort weiter that which he calls "die Schwelle der Schweigezone."[148] Indeed, as has been shown, the tendency towards poetic fragmentation and occasional "speechlessness" can even be discerned as far back as the collection Neue Gedichte. Not all of Kaschnitz' later poems end with a gesture of speechlessness, but the examples analysed above demonstrate clearly that the danger is never entirely absent.

5. The Ultimate Refusal to Submit to Speechlessness.

Thus far in this chapter Kaschnitz' theoretical concepts regarding the function of poetry and her own poetic development in the light of these have been analysed. It has been shown that she regarded modern poetry as a means of providing hope in an age where nihilism seems to have gained the upper hand. She maintained that the modern poem has the tendency to emphasise only the negative facets of existence, but in doing so, it is able to cause within the reader a reaction against them and thus make him more aware of the inherently positive aspects of life. In this way, despite outward appearances, modern poetry becomes for Kaschnitz an instrument for instilling moral and cultural optimism.

As was also shown, however, Kaschnitz' earlier poems go one step further than this. They not only unequivocally present the more execrable elements of existence but also directly stress the ones which are more worthwhile. These poems evince the belief in an essentially balanced world pattern in which the positive eventually triumphs over the negative.

In the volumes from the Neue Gedichte onwards the more harmonious "Weltbild" of the earlier works breaks down. Reality as a whole is presented in an ambiguous light and its more negative aspects are seen to predominate. Even so, Kaschnitz refuses to yield entirely to a state of complete pessimism, but continues to point out the inherent value of life and how it is possible for the individual to survive despite the seemingly overwhelming odds against this. The struggle to accomplish this, however, becomes increasingly more difficult and thus notes of hope and consolation become much more subdued.

Although Kaschnitz tenaciously insists on furthering her idealistic aims in these later volumes, she also begins at the same time to voice scepticism about them, suggesting that because reality has become so unintelligible it is hardly feasible to believe any longer that its positive aspects do in fact exist. As a result her poetry becomes threatened with speechlessness because of the suspicion that its very foundations have been based on a misconception. Indeed, it was postulated that it would be better to fall completely silent rather than to continue. In addition to this, it was shown that Kaschnitz' poetry also becomes threatened with speechlessness when it tries to get to grips with the chaos of reality, and the conclusion was reached that it is ultimately the disintegration of the original harmonious world pattern which is the basic cause of the impending disintegration of her lyric. Finally it was demonstrated by means of selected examples how a number of Kaschnitz' later poems have the tendency to falter stylistically and hover on the verge of speechlessness when aiming to describe a particular facet of reality and/or to reveal its more positive aspects.

The descent into speechlessness does not, however, mark the final stage of Kaschnitz' poetic development. Rather,

her later poems may be regarded as continual attempts to overcome it, to continue in spite of it. It is a notable feature of her attitude that she never entirely admits defeat, even though her confidence as to the feasibility of her achieving her desired aims becomes severely shaken.

In her final volume of poetry entitled Kein Zauberspruch[149] Kaschnitz continues the main themes as outlined in the body of this chapter. As the title suggests,the work does not try to present an idealistic picture of life. The majority of the poems merely record through the eyes of the lyrical "Ich" ". . . das Leben / Seine Erscheinungen / Seine Verwerfungen / Die immer neuen,"[150] the degeneracy of modern man and society, the isolation and loneliness of the poetess herself.

In the poem entitled "Standort" Kaschnitz sums up her position here as being ". . . ziemlich nah vom Altar / Aber stumm, ein verstockter Beter,"[151] and in commenting more fully on this poem in her "Aufzeichnungen" she states that it expresses her feeling of despair regarding the cultural and moral suicide of modern civilisation and her own powerlessness to change the course of events. She declares that she experiences "die Verzweiflung der biblischen Propheten, die sahen und nicht abwenden konnten, warnten und nichts bewirkten."[152] This constitutes, therefore, once again, an open admission by the poetess that her poetry cannot succeed in its aims, and indeed, certain of the poems of Kein Zauberspruch deal thematically with the impotence of poetry in the modern world and the threat of its extinction.[153]

Despite this mood of poetological resignation, however, and the feeling that most of what she writes serves no purpose, Kaschnitz never gives up the hope that at least a small proportion of it will not entirely be without some validity:

Meine Gedichte
Ins Schmierheft gekritzelt
Verworfen zerhackt
Mit neuen Gliedmaßen ausgestattet
Blau angestrichen rot
Mit Flitter behangen
Der Flitter heruntergerissen
Kargwort neben Kargwort

Endlich das Ganze zerknüllt
Von der Hand in den Müll
Und fortgerollt mit Getöse
Am nächsten Morgen
Nur Worte noch zwei oder drei
Tanzen im Kielstaub
Leuchten auf in der Sonne.[154]

Thus, although Kaschnitz' poetry is constantly threatened with the danger of speechlessness, it tenaciously refuses in the final instance to submit completely to it. The following extract from the collection of essays Menschen und Dinge 1945 sums up her personal and poetological attitude precisely:

> Ja, gleichen wir nicht wirklich dem Kapitän eines Schiffes, der sein Tagebuch schreibt, seine getreuen Aufzeichnungen über Kurs und Wetter und den Zustand von Schiff und Mannschaft und da er Not leidet wird seine Handschrift immer unsicherer und da er noch Hoffnung hat, strömen seine Worte über von lebensgierigem Schmerz. Aber was das Wesentliche ist: er legt die Feder nicht hin, er macht das Buch nicht für immer zu. Solange das Schiff nicht untergegangen ist, wird er immer weiter Zeugnis ablegen.[155]

CHAPTER III

GÜNTER EICH

Die Furcht unserer Herzen
ist die Furcht der Leinwand.
("Verlassene Staffelei," from
Zu den Akten)

im Papierkorb
rasseln die welken Blätter,
die Igel unter den Gebüschen,
fast stumm,
wohnen zugänglich
dem Stachelfell meiner Einsichten,
wir reiben sie aneinander,
höchstens Moos wird bewegt,
die Welt nicht.
("Ryoanji," from *Zu den Akten*)

Just as the poetry of Marie Luise Kaschnitz underwent considerable formal and thematic changes in the course of its development, so did that of Günter Eich which sporadically appeared in seven volumes during the years 1930-1972.[1] In 1965 he himself described in retrospect the transition which took place in his work: "Ich habe als verspäteter Expressionist und Naturlyriker begonnen, heute enthält meine Lyrik viel groteske Züge, das liegt wohl an einem Hang zum Realen, es ist mir nicht möglich, die Welt nur in der Auswahl des Schönen und Edlen und Feierlichen zu sehen. Alles addiert, ergibt, so meine ich, die Welt eine negative Zahl."[2] From this it can be seen that, like Kaschnitz, he too began his poetic career by using set traditional stylistic and thematic models, whereas later these were completely discarded for more unconventional forms. The reason for this transformation, as he states, was his increasing tendency to view the world as it actually is and not as it ideally might be. If the world is felt to be grotesque and can only be seen in a "negative" light,[3] then poetry will directly reflect this situation. It goes without saying that this is exactly the attitude adopted by Kaschnitz in her later works: indeed, it is the one which caused them to become exposed to the dangers of lyrical disintegration and speechlessness.

Unlike Kaschnitz, however, Eich never did believe in a preconceived harmonious world pattern in which Good would eventually triumph over Evil. On the contrary, as he himself confessed, he did not claim to know what reality was, and so it became the aim of his poetry to uncover it: "Sie (die Wirklichkeit) ist nicht meine Voraussetzung, sondern mein Ziel. Ich muß sie erst herstellen."[4] Eich was of the belief that there existed some kind of absolute, timeless reality, more perfect than the merely empirical sphere, knowledge of which, however, had become increasingly concealed to mankind throughout the course of time. A major preoccupation of his poetry, therefore, was to show how it is possible to gain insight into this mystical sphere and to obtain intimations of truth and of that which is eternal whilst still being a part of earthly life. Concurrent with the search for an understanding of this obscure and elusive reality Eich's poetry also voices a kind of existential and later political criticism of the world which man has built up for himself because it is this which conceals insight into the more absolute sphere. As will be shown, however, Eich's later poetry tends to display an attitude of resignation and defeat, and thus reach the verge of speechlessness, firstly, when it is recognised that, despite its efforts, it has come no nearer to explaining the nature of the postulated "higher" reality, and secondly, because of a feeling of weariness resulting from the awareness that the human world is incorrigible and that criticism of it and giving warnings about the disastrous course which it is taking serve no useful purpose, as nothing can be changed.

The progression towards the state of artistic speechlessness will be analysed in the following way. The chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first of these the treatment of both main areas of Eich's poetic subject matter, as outlined above, are analysed in detail up to the volume Botschaften des Regens (1955). Here it is shown in two separate sub-sections how he uses poetry as a vehicle with which not only to criticise what he experiences as being the negative aspects of human life, but also to create an awareness of more absolute forms of reality which stand in sharp contrast to the imperfections of the man-made world. In addition to this, it is also illustrated how, in these earlier works, Eich voices profound doubts as to the validity of both these undertakings. This attitude gives rise to the suspicion that the justification for his poetic creativity has been placed in jeopardy and that it therefore finds itself confronted with the possibility of speechlessness.

In the second section it is illustrated how, during the last stage of his poetic development, Eich's scepticism with regard to his poetological aims reaches a climax. This results in the recognition that an irrevocable end-stage has been reached and that his work can only admit defeat, a situation which presages ultimate "Verstummen."

1. Criticism of Man's Existential Position and the Search for Truth: Gedichte (1930), Abgelegene Gehöfte (1948), Untergrundbahn (1949), Botschaften des Regens (1955).

i) "Weltschmerz" and Social Criticism.

Eich was essentially a pessimist. The one thread which unites his earlier and later poetry, despite the considerable formal changes which it underwent, was an attitude which they display of world-weariness and profound scepticism concerning the nature of the existential position of man as a whole and more specifically the society in which he lives. In many respects his poetry is to be regarded as a scathing criticism of and an indictment against humanity and the course on which it is heading.[5] However, as will be shown here, Eich becomes by the volume Botschaften des Regens increasingly resigned to the fact that his criticisms have been serving no useful purpose, that the mere documentation of the negative aspects of the world cannot bring about any change for the better. This in turn results in a desire on his part to give up using poetry as a vehicle for direct criticism, an idea which brings with it a gesture of poetic defeat.

Eich's first volume of poetry entitled simply Gedichte, which was published in 1930 when he was 23, owes much, as several critics have pointed out, to the literary traditions of German Romanticism and Expressionism, with their abundant use of nature imagery, their visions of decay and their moods of melancholy and "Sehnsucht."[6] The lyrical subject of the majority of these poems is shown to be suffering from an acute form of overpowering "Weltschmerz."[7] Its existence seems to play itself out in a state of perpetual, static boredom:

> ich . . . . bin in gleicher
> Langeweile vom zehnten bis zum achzigsten Jahre.[8]

It leads a life of aimless sterility, constantly in a state of emotional flux:

> Deine Tage gehen falsch,
> deine Nächte stehn voll öder Sterne.
>
> Immer kommen hunderte Gedanken,
> immer gehen hunderte Gedanken.[9]

It is continually plagued by the fact that nothing seems to be of permanent value, but is transitory, and therefore there can be no hope of being able to gain a fixed hold on life:

> Gab es Wind, gab es Abend, von soviel Frühlingen
> blieb nur ein Ton, und der fernste der Tage ist der,
> welcher eben verging.[10]

The very state of being human is regarded with disgust:

> deine Worte, dein Gesicht macht dich gemein.[11]

Indeed, the somewhat dramatic desire is expressed that it be completely discarded and forgotten:

Es genügte ein Tier zu sein
Ach du ertrinkst im Regen der Menschlichkeit.
Manchmal glückt dir ein vergeßlicher Tag.[12]

In all these poems, therefore, the reality of human existence is presented as being a painful burden from which there appears to be no alleviation. All thoughts of possible happiness are completely precluded and thus an atmosphere of melancholy and despair predominates.

Eich's next volume of poetry, Abgelegene Gehöfte, although it was published eighteen years after the Gedichte in 1948, contains pieces which date as far back as 1930. Here too, the general "Trostlosigkeit" of the human condition is forcefully presented, but this time it is seen within a definite historical context, namely that of the Second World War and the time immediately following it. In certain of the poems which belong to the general category of "Trümmerlyrik" Eich describes his experiences both during the war as a soldier in the German army and after it when he was interned as a prisoner of war by the Americans until 1946 at Camp 16 in the vicinity of Remagen. Although these poems are, as Egbert Krispyn puts it, "highly subjective," and "plainly autobiographical,"[13] they may also be considered to reflect the overall conditions to which many were subjected in Germany at that time.

With stark realism Eich depicts the deadening monotony, the shocked numbness and the mental anguish experienced during those years. Life is portrayed as having been stripped of all the trappings normally to be found in a cultured society. Images such as the following evoke a world full of sordidness and squalor: "Karbol- und Todesgeruch," "An Achselhöhle und Geschlecht / nähre ich Ekel und Qual," "Als Gruß der Welt noch herüberdrängt / der Geruch vom Latrine und Chlor," "Nichts wird sein als der Regen,- / mich schützt kein Dach und kein Damm -, / zertreten wird auf den Wegen / das Grün des Frühlings zu Schlamm," "Über stinkendem Graben, / Papier voll Blut und Urin, / umschwirrt von funkelnden Fliegen, / hocke ich in den Knien."[14] Home for the prisoner is an "Erdloch;"[15] every new day seems to be like doomsday and is a constant struggle for the barest survival;[16] hunger can never be stilled.[17] The lyrical subject of these poems is seen to be a prisoner not only in the physical but also in the spiritual sense. Even his thoughts are unable to escape the confines of the barbed wire:

> Gedanken gehn den Trampelpfad
> wie ich armselig und bekrückt.
> Sie machen halt am Stacheldraht
> und kehren dumpf zu mir zurück.[18]

His feelings gradually become deadened because of the sterility of his external milieu:

> . . . der Geruch von Schweiß und ungelüfteten Spinden
> (Wächst) übers Geweb des Gefühls wie mit Schimmel . . .[19]

Eich not only describes in these poems the complete annihilation of his own personal world but also of the cultural, idealistic heritage of Germany itself. In "Frühling in der goldenen Meil," for example, "Nibelungen und Faust," symbols of former German heroism and the highest literary achievements, are seen to be in ashes and, what is more, this appears to be a matter of complete indifference to the lyrical subject who is more concerned with his own survival than with the preservation of the past:

> Daheim verbrannten Kleider und Schuh,
> Nibelungen und Faust.
> Ich schaue dem Flug der Mosquitos zu,
> mit fiebrigen Augen, stumpf und verlaust.[20]

Also, in the poem "Latrine" lines from Hölderlin's "Andenken" are contrasted with the filth of the present conditions, and, seen in this light the German idealistic tradition to which such poetry belongs becomes an absurd anachronism. It can have no place in a world where sublimation of the human spirit is an impossibility:

> Irr mir im Ohre schallen
> Verse von Hölderlin.
> In schneeiger Reinheit spiegeln
> Wolken sich im Urin.
>
> "Geh aber nun und grüße
> die schöne Garonne -"
> Unter den schwankenden Füßen
> schwimmen die Wolken davon.[21]

Indeed, in the poem "Wie grau es auch regnet," Eich forecasts the end of all poetry which professes to give utterance to such virtues as love and beauty simply because the more noble human passions have become extinguished as man has been compelled, by force of circumstance, to preoccupy himself with the bare necessities of survival:

Die Macht der Gedichte,
die innigen Küsse,
die Nacht voll Gespräche,
den Sommer der Flüsse.

Der Zauber der Verse,
im Hunger vergessen -,
die zärtlichen Herzen,
wer hat sie besessen?[22]

As a direct result of the totally degenerate state into which civilisation seems to have fallen, where all cultural and moral values have been all but eliminated, Eich voices in Abgelegene Gehöfte the same loathing of the human race and the same desire not to belong to it as he did in the Gedichte:

Den Albtraum gab mir der Wind ein, daß wir verwandelt
werden in Insekten,
am Morgen erwachen als riesige Ameisen, Heuschrecken
und langbeinige Weberknechte,
mit kugligen Facettenaugen uns anglotzen, gierig nach
Beute
längst überdrüssig, anzugehören dem Menschengeschlechte.[23]

In the poems presented above from Gedichte and Abgelegene Gehöfte the depiction of the sterility of human life and the accompanying feeling of "Weltschmerz" are seen to be experienced for the most part through the perspective of a lyrical "Ich." In other poems, however, the pain and bitterness from which the lyrical subject is described as suffering and the desolate state in which, in his eyes, human civilisation is seen to find itself, are also shown to be reflected in nature. This technique of projecting subjective moods and thoughts into external phenomena and their environment was, of course, a favourite device used by Goethe and many of the German Romantics, and was also frequently employed, as Clemens

Heselhaus shows, in the lyrics of such twentieth century German nature poets as Adolf von Hatzfeld, Elisabeth Langgässer and Oskar Loerke, amongst others.[24]

Thus in the Gedichte images such as the following, for example--"bittre Sterne," "tote Wasserspiegel;" "Schön weint der Herbst in bunten Flüssen, / der Himmel ist verloht;" "der Regen tränt im langen März,"[25]--enhance the lyrical subject's feelings of inner stagnation, hostility towards the world around him and his accompanying sorrow.

In Abgelegene Gehöfte it is not so much the subjective "Innerlichkeit" of a particular lyrical "Ich" which becomes reflected in nature, but rather the general somber mood of a civilisation which has been ravaged by war and which is faced with total ruination. Thus, the wind is felt to be a harbinger of death:

> Der Nachtwind weht über die Träumer hin wie über die Wachenden,
> weht aus Herz und Gedanken allen die Wärme. Es rauscht
> matter das Blut unter seinem Anhauch, und es vernimmt
> die leisen Schritte des Todes, wer in die Mitternacht lauscht.[26]

A mysterious presentiment of death and "Weltuntergang" is experienced "im Dämmer des Waldes."[27] Terror, which spreads like an emaciating deficiency disease, is to be found in the branches of a chestnut tree:

> Bittres Frühlingslicht, es keimt die Reinheit
> tiefst gefaltet im Kastanientrieb,
> nah dem Grauen, welches ungestaltet
> wie Rachitis in den Ästen blieb.[28]

Sadness and melancholy are seen to pervade through a variety of natural objects:

> Die Lärche gilbt unter den Nadelgeschwistern,
> sie birgt das lichte Haupt.
> Die Schwermut hab ich in ihrem Gezweige
> wie einen Geist zu sehen geglaubt.
>
> aus leeren Kartoffelmieten
> dünstet die Melancholie.[29]

Finally, in the poem entitled "Winterliche Miniatur," all the various facets of a nature scene in winter resemble an "Alphabet der Bitternis."[30]

The overall effect which Eich achieves by projecting human emotions and experiences into the natural sphere, whether they be the subjective ones of a lyrical "Ich" or the more objective ones of civilisation as a whole, is an atmosphere of totality. The experiences of desolation, decay and death, and the reactions felt towards them such as despair, bitterness and fear are seen to be not just limited to the human sphere but are also generated in nature. The bleak situation which Eich portrays in the Gedichte and in Abgelegene Gehöfte concerning the human condition seems to have engulfed the whole of existence.

Eich's next two volumes of poetry, Untergrundbahn (1949) and Botschaften des Regens (1955), continue the depiction of the negative aspects of man's position in the world. In Abgelegene Gehöfte, as was shown, the setting for this was war-torn Germany. In Untergrundbahn and Botschaften des Regens attention is focused upon the reality of the post-war years. Eich's earlier pessimism is continued and augmented: in essence he shows that nothing seems to have changed and that the situation which prevails in society is no different from the spiritually deadening conditions of the prisoner-of-war camp.

In the first collection two poems depict the grim sterility of modern life. The lyrical subject of "Weg zum Bahnhof," for example, is seen to have become benumbed by the monotonous vacuity of his everyday existence. He inwardly rebels, however, on experiencing the warmth that is being emitted from the bakeries on the way to work as they suggest a better alternative, inaccessible to him, to the chilling misery which he is made to suffer:

> Nun aber rührt der warme Hauch
> aus den Bäckereien
> mein Herz wie eine Zärtlichkeit
> und ich kann nicht gelassen sein.[31]

The stifling, polluted atmosphere of modern life is evoked in the title poem "Untergrundbahn," in which a tube station symbolically represents present-day technological society and the rush and clamour of routine living. In the centre of this environment the lyrical subject is described as having lost his soul: all beauty is seen to have disappeared and everything seems to have been enveloped by darkness and choking dust. The desolation of the outside world threatens to cause complete inner spiritual asphyxiation, as it was also shown to do in certain of the prisoner-of-war poems: a cigarette vendor, surrounded by cheap and gaudy advertisements and pyramids of smoke is described as inwardly and outwardly withering away:

> Im Grabgewölbe dieser Pyramide
> dörrt, wie sie selber dörrt, ihr Seelenfriede.[32]

On surveying the wretchedness of this situation Eich comes to the conclusion that man has been completely deserted by God:

> Manchmal weiß ich, daß Gott am meisten sich sorgt um
> das Dasein der Schnecke.
> Er baut ihr ein Haus. Uns aber liebt er nicht.[33]

In Botschaften des Regens the idea that the external world, in this case society, is in the process of encroaching upon and engulfing the inner world of the individual is continued. In the poem entitled "Gegenwart"[34] the powers in authority are seen to have completely subjugated man's freedom of thought and action to the dictates of bureaucracy. Any manifestation of personal emotion and genuine feeling such as love is declared as being "ungültig." The life of each individual has been conveniently compartmentalised so as to fit in with the whole--it has been "einberechnet von der Stadtverwaltung"--and is regarded as being of no lasting consequence; it is "zufällig." The asking of questions is discouraged in order that the status quo be blindly accepted. The result of this dehumanising process is that every "Ich" becomes totally isolated from a "Du": "Wo bist du, wenn du neben mir gehst?" It leads a robot-like existence of spiritual complacency. The poem "Es ist gesorgt" shows that man has become so brainwashed by the stiflingly paternalistic attitude of those in authority that he is prepared to accept everything the State cares to offer him. Indeed, he even ardently offers up prayers to receive it:

> Gebete, die um das bitten, was geschieht,
> die tägliche Demütigung,
> das Salz auf die Wunden,
> das steinerne Brot
> und eine kürzere Wegstrecke.[34]

Modern society is equated with a wasteland which buries and conceals all possibilities of consolation:

> Die Tröstungen sind versteckt:
> Im Kehricht vervielfacht die Rose
> abblätternd
> ihren geträumten Duft.[35]

Happiness dwells "in den Abgründen . . . verborgen,"[36] as it is stated in the poem "Augenblick im Juni."

In addition to evoking a general mood of "Trostlosigkeit" as far as the situation of the present age is concerned, Eich also paints a dismal picture regarding the future. Atomic warfare is described as being a permanent fixture and it is thought that it will eventually result in the complete disfigurement of the human race:

> (Man sagt, die Mißgeburten nähmen seit Hiroshima zu.)
>
> Wenn das Fenster geöffnet ist, gedenke ich derer,
> die sich liebten im Jahre neunzehnhundertundvier
> und der Menschen des Jahres dreitausend,
> zahnlos, haarlos.[37]

In the first two volumes of Eich's poetry it was shown how human experiences were directly reflected in external phenomena thereby giving the impression that not just the sphere of mankind but the whole world was enveloped in a feeling of sadness and bitterness because of the course towards destruction which it appeared to be taking. This is also seen occasionally to be the case in Untergrundbahn and Botschaften des Regens. In the poem "Schuttablage,"[38] for example, "die Trauer der Welt" is felt to be present in the stinging nettles which surround a rubbish dump, and in "Kleine Reparatur" the diseases, to be understood in the figurative as well as in the literal sense, from which mankind is suffering, seem to be spreading through telephone and electricity cables: ". . . Krankheiten gehen um im Drahtsystem der Erde. / Telefonleitungen und Erdkabel verbreiten sie weiter."[39]

However, for the most part, the sphere of nature which in the earlier poems merely passively mirrored the human situation now begins in Untergrundbahn and Botschaften des Regens to take an active part in drawing man out of the state of spiritual lethargy into which society is described as having led him, and to warn him of the dangers which lie ahead if he does not radically change his ways. Thus, in the poem entitled "Angst"[40] crows write a mysterious language in the sky which the lyrical subject is forced to read and which fills him with terror ("Grauen"). In "Herde am Waldrand"[41] a shepherd suddenly becomes "erschrocken" when nature ominously gives him a grotesque warning in the form of a spider's web which he can taste in his mouth. In

"Andenken" the wind marks man for death because he has wrongfully exploited the sanctity of nature:

> Die Moore, in die wir gehen wollten, sind trockengelegt.
> Der Torf hat unsere Abende gewärmt.
> Schwarzen Staub hebt der Wind auf.
> Er bläst die Namen von den Grabsteinen
> und trägt uns ein
> mit diesem Tage.[42]

In the title poem of Botschaften des Regens drops of rain are likened to letters of a secret language which imparts to the lyrical subject cryptic messages that reveal to him the despair and poverty of the world at large, and reproach him for his lack of action in this regard:

> Bestürzt vernehme ich
> die Botschaften der Verzweiflung,
> die Botschaften der Armut
> und die Botschaften des Vorwurfs.
> Es kränkt mich, daß sie an mich gerichtet sind,
> denn ich fühle mich ohne Schuld.[43]

In other poems from this collection images of rain and water seem to be constantly present, also acting as ominous signs from nature. Unlike in the poem "Botschaften des Regens," however, the messages which they contain are never directly revealed, but there can be no doubt that they possess a menacing import: they create a feeling of uneasiness. In "Kurz vor dem Regen,"[44] for example, the onset of a rainstorm causes panic to break out, and the lyrical subject of the poem perceives a disturbing message which causes him to sob, and in "Lesen im Gewitter"[45] mysterious texts are observed in nature which seem to control the "Verfolgung" of man.

Thus, in the poems quoted above, nature appears to react against the human sphere. Once again, as in the earlier poems, the whole world seems to be involved in what is taking place in human society, but whereas formerly there seemed to exist a kind of empathy between man and nature, man now appears to be completely isolated.

In Untergrundbahn and Botschaften des Regens Eich not only shows that the realm of nature is trying to warn man of his impending downfall: both collections also contain poems which directly predict that the human race is heading for inevitable disaster. In "Betrachtet die Fingerspitzen"[46] it is stated that one day a plague which was thought to have been wiped out completely will re-appear and destroy the illusory comfortable world of man, an idea which is repeated in "Wenn du die Klapper des Aussätzigen hörst,"[47] where the disease of leprosy is seen to be inherent in man and which will eventually catch up with him. In "Im Sonnenlicht"[48] the notion is expressed that "das Gute" and "das Glück" do not belong to man: he is admonished to give them up because if he does not do so, he will become the victim of some terrible kind of retribution. For this reason he should not be satisfied with his situation but should live in fear: "Oh Brüder, daß ihr nicht bangt!"

Thus far, therefore, it has been shown that Eich's pessimism as it evinced in his first four volumes of poetry, regarding on a broader level the existential position of the human race as a whole and more specifically the situation of man in society, has been unmitigating. The very state of being human was looked upon with contempt. The world of man was seen to deaden the inner spirit and to turn him into an automaton. Mankind itself seems to be heading for an inescapable nemesis.

In Botschaften des Regens, however, this mood of pessimism is combined with an unmistakable tone of resignation.[49] It would seem that Eich has begun to grow weary of describing the negative aspects of the human world and of warning man of the fate that awaits him, and so therefore he expresses the desire to retreat from this task. The poem "Wo ich wohne" illustrates this attitude:

> Als ich das Fenster öffnete,
> schwammen Fische ins Zimmer,
> Heringe. Es schien
> eben ein Schwarm vorüberzuziehen.
> Auch zwischen den Birnbäumen spielten sie.
> Die meisten aber
> hielten sich noch im Wald,
> über den Schonungen und den Kiesgruben.
>
> Sie sind lästig. Lästiger aber sind noch
> die Matrosen
> (auch höhere Ränge, Steuerleute, Kapitäne),
> die vielfach ans offene Fenster kommen
> und um Feuer bitten für ihren schlechten Tabak.
>
> Ich will ausziehen.[50]

In another poem from this collection the lyrical subject is also described as having opened a window. In this instance "Vergänglichkeit" and "das Grauen der Erde" are seen to be blown in by the wind.[51] Here, however, the chaos of reality which greets the lyrical "Ich" has been transformed into an absurd, offensive vision which threatens literally to drown him. Instead of weathering out this bizarre onslaught the "Ich" decides to avoid it altogether, to initiate a tactical withdrawal. Thus this poem describes in veiled, humorous terms a capitulation before the overpowering confusion of reality. The lyrical subject would rather escape from reality than confront it.

This attitude of withdrawal is also repeated in the poem "Briefstelle" in which the lyrical subject makes a resolution to cut himself off from the outside world by not reading about it in books:

> Keins von den Büchern werde ich lesen.
>
> Ich erinnere mich
> an die strohumflochtenen Stämme,
> an die ungebrannten Ziegel in den Regalen.
> Der Schmerz bleibt und die Bilder gehen.
>
> Mein Alter will ich in der grünen Dämmerung
> des Weins verbringen,
> ohne Gespräch . . . .[52]

Seen in a poetological light these lines may be taken as being a direct admission by Eich that, as a result of the "pain" caused by his mood of pessimism regarding the human race, he will not continue to discuss it but try to forget and ignore it. In this way it appears, therefore, that his endeavours to reflect upon and criticise directly or indirectly contemporary reality through the medium of poetry are approaching a stage of termination. The existence and validity of such poetry have become seriously threatened, and so the possibility of poetic defeat or speechlessness would seem to have arisen.

ii) The Search for a More Total World View.

In the preceding section it was seen that Eich in his first four volumes of poetry was severely critical and pessimistic concerning human existence. The position seemed hopeless, so much so that he eventually appeared to have reached the point where he wished to renounce his criticism and seemed to capitulate before the situation.

From his very first literary beginnings onward, however, Eich also developed what was to become in his lyric, at least up to the volume Botschaften des Regens and in many of his radio plays, his major theme, namely, to show that the mundane sphere is merely one part of the total picture of reality, that it is not in itself a finite form of existence but is a relative one, and that there remain other facets of life, more permanent and absolute, to be uncovered.

Eich, however, was not unaware of the limitations imposed upon him by human language with regard to the carrying out of these intentions. In one of his few poetological statements, "Der Schriftsteller vor der Realität," (1956)[53] he implies that in order to express the absolute, an "absolute" language would be required, one in which "das Wort und das Ding zusammenfallen." He reiterates the Romantic notion that all facets of the empirical world itself are individual components of such a language, that they form a mysterious "Urtext," although, he maintains, it is essentially impossible for man to utilise directly this language. The best that he can hope for is to "translate" it into human speech. In this way, although "Wirklichkeit" will not be directly named in this process, an approximation of it can be attained: "Die gelungenste Übersetzung kommt ihm (i.e., dem Urtext) am nächsten und erreicht den höchsten Grad von Wirklichkeit." Thus, many of his poems try to evoke the presence of those aspects of reality which would normally elude human cognition and give some insight into them, or else they describe how it is possible to perceive them whilst still being subject to the more restrictive dictates of an empirical perspective.

Aspects of this area of Eich's poetic subject matter have been widely discussed in general terms by interpreters of his work, often to the detriment of his other themes as outlined in the previous section. Günter Bien, for example, writes: "Eich entdeckt (und das kann man, wie immer bei ihm, nicht wörtlich genug nehmen) neue Welten,"[54] and Dieter Stolte was of the opinion that Eich's poetry did not primarily concern itself with a reality "im Sinne des rational Kontrollierbaren oder empirisch und faktisch Aufweisbaren," but was more preoccupied with "eine tiefere Wirklichkeit, die in den Dingen selbst steckt, und die ihren eigentlichen Grund ausmacht." Thus he sees an affinity between it and Heidegger's definition of art as "das Ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit."[55] E. Krispyn concentrates almost exclusively on these more metaphysical and ontological intentions in Eich's work, and in connection with this he surmises that Eich, in his endeavours to express the truth of existence, wished to "re-echo the creative Logos," to "rediscover the adamic language."[56]

The nature of the more "real" aspects of reality which Eich wished to "translate" into human language, or more specifically into poetry, became for him, however, just as problematical as the empirical human world. This section will show that by the volume Botschaften des Regens his poetic attempts at obtaining greater insight into the more "absolute" sphere also seem to have reached an end-stage upon the realisation that the mysteries of existence are essentially unfathomable to the human mind, that they are "untranslatable." This knowledge also brings with it the suspicion that the poetic word has ultimately failed in its task of providing a greater understanding of them. Before the aspect of poetic failure can be discussed, however, it is necessary to examine how Eich uncovers the hidden facets of reality in his poems and what qualities he ascribes to them.

In all of Eich's first four volumes of poetry direct intimations are given of the presence of a higher, more universal form of reality than that of the finite human world, or of levels of experience not normally accessible to human perception. Occasionally these are described in vague general terms which equate them with "heimliche Königreiche,"[57] or that which has not yet been perceived by the human senses:

> Nachts hören, was nie gehört wurde:
> den hundertsten Namen Allahs,
> den nicht mehr aufgeschriebenen Paukenton,
> als Mozart starb,
> im Mutterleib vernommene Gespräche.[58]

The qualities of this other reality are more concretely described elsewhere. It is connected with eternity, "Zwischen die Tage schieben sich Ewigkeiten";[59] and immortality, "Wie nahe bist du Unsterblichkeit, im Fledermausflügel, / im Scheinwerfer-Augenpaar, das den Hügel herab sich naht."[60] It is a sphere of "truth", "Als ich das Küchenspind öffnete, / fand ich die Wahrheit / zugedeckt / in den beschrifteten Büchsen,"[61] and a place where love attains its purest form, "Zwischen den Ziffern der Abfahrtszeichen / breiten sich die Besitztümer unserer Liebe aus. / Ungetrennt / bleiben darin die Orte der Welt, / nicht vermessen und unauffindbar."[62] From these quotations it can be seen that the abstract regions which the poems from which they are excerpted create an awareness of are not to be found in some kind of mystical "Jenseits" far removed from the earthly sphere, but rather they seem to be fully integrated in and through the latter, appearing in the most banal and unlikely objects, although they are highly elusive and only rarely does their presence become open to normal cognition.

In most of Eich's poetry up to Botschaften des Regens awareness of another plane of reality, which exists parallel to and in close proximity with the empirical level of experience, is created in nature poems. The whole of nature, which was seen in the previous section to reflect certain human states of mind and also to reprove mankind for its actions, is frequently portrayed not merely at its face value but as a separate reality, a higher form of life, charged with symbolical significance. As such it stands in contrast to the more pernicious aspects of the man-made world with its bent for destruction and lack of spiritual freedom.

Some of the "hidden" qualities of the natural world which Eich tries to bring to the surface are as follows. Nature is occasionally presented as being an irrational, fairy-tale-like sphere of magic and mystery, where the singing of birds and the calls of other animals are described as being a "Zauberlaut," a "Hauch der Zauberei,"[63] and where a new, supernatural dream world begins:

> Im Schlummer zugesponnen,
> von Hexen angehaucht,
> hat mir die Welt begonnen,
> in Tau und Harz getaucht.
>
> Sie bleibt im Abendwinde,
> wenn der Wacholder knarrt,
> so flüchtig wie ein Atem
> und ohne Gegenwart.[64]

For nature time seems to have lost its meaning, to have stood still, so to speak. It is still seen to contain in the present traces of past ages which chronologically range from the prehistoric, "In Flugsand und Schaum / geschöpft und geendet, / zurück in den Raum / der Vergängnis gewendet, / zerstäubt in den Winden / Devon und Silur, / im Salzhauch zu finden / Planetenspur";[65] to less distant mythological and historical ages, "Der Talgrund zeichnet Mäander / in seine Wiesen hinein. / Die Weide birgt Alexander, / Cäsarn der Brennesselstein. // Auch wo die Spinnen weben, / der Spitz der Bettler verbellt, / im Rübenland bleiben am Leben / die großen Namen der Welt,"[66] and finally to more recent times. The presence of the deceased mother of a lyrical subject, for example, is experienced in a cloud: "Wolke als Himalaya / türmt sich auf ins Ungemeßene. / Ach auf diesen Gipfeln nah / bist du mir, du lang Vergeßene."[67]

Not only is nature depicted as a magical sphere of timelessness: in its totality it is also seen to be a living, breathing force endowed with human or animal-like qualities.[68] Thus, for instance, the various natural phenomena which comprise facets of a nature scene at the end of winter are likened to animals preparing for the mating season:

Geflecktes Fell
aus Boden und Schnee.
Es bleckt die Zähne
die Weidenchaussee.

. . . .

Es zuckt unterm Lichte
die Pantherhaut.
Im Schamgesträuch
der Nachtreif taut.[69]

The action of the squalling wind blowing rain against a mountain side is equated with the sweeping of some giant staircase:

Schiefergraue Regenschleppe,
dampfend feuchter Urwaldhang,
Fallwind fegt die Riesentreppe
als ein klagender Gesang.[70]

The presentation of the whole of nature as being a living force is enhanced in many poems by the idea that it possesses a mysterious language of its own which various natural phenomena use to communicate with each other. This language is seen to be both spoken: "Die Wälder sprechen laut miteinander"; "Die Elster stammelt. / Als spräche der Raum, / behext sie den Baum"; "in seltsam wiederholten Klängen / die Ödnis mit dem Himmel spricht"; "Bruchstücke von Gesprächen, / die unter Wasser geführt werden,"[71] as well as written--the "Wurzeln" and "Ranken" of various trees and plants form a "Text" or a "wuchernde Schrift."[72] In addition, animate and inanimate entities, such as birds or the sea, are all described as having the ability to write in a secret language.[73]

Eich does not only reveal in such poems as those quoted above that the sphere of nature is a clandestine world of its own, that it has many other elusive aspects which remain hidden if it is only observed on a superficial level. He also shows that various natural phenomena seem to be initiated into the secrets of eternity, and, as such, are superior to man. Thus, for example, birds are described as having the ability to escape death and therefore are immortal: "Die Krähen haben Flügel, dem Tod zu entrinnen".[74] Animals can gain an understanding of "paradise": "Gelassen vernimmt er ('der graue Spitz des Pfarrers') / das Gerücht aus den Wäldern, / die Tore des Paradieses würden geöffnet",[75] or are themselves an inherent part not just of earthly existence but also of eternity: "Das Ochsengespann in der Tiefe / zieht Holz in die Ewigkeit."[76]

In addition to portraying in a seemingly objective light the presence in nature of a level of reality which exists beneath the surface of the phenomenal world, Eich also describes how it is possible for man with his limited empirical perspective to gain insight into this reality. Occasionally these insights are of a vague and indeterminate nature and are somewhat akin to ethereal, mystical experiences, as in the following examples:

> Verstummen uns die Zeichen,
> wenn Lurch und Krähe schwieg,
> hallt aus den Sternbereichen
> die andere Musik.[77]

> Vom wartenden Ruder
> fallen die Tropfen.
> Tönt an den Kiel nicht
> ein zaghaftes Klopfen?
>
> Manchmal im Ohre
> hör ichs noch heute,
> späh ich ins Röhricht,
> was es bedeute.[78]

In certain other poems insight into something which is more tangible, and yet not always devoid of an air of mystery, is described as being perceived in nature. For example "eternity":

> Wir und die Blätter ahnen
> die Ewigkeit im Winde.[79]

> Werde der Tage ich inne,
> wie ich sie alle verlor,
> raunt die prophetische Spinne
> Ewigkeit mir ins Ohr.[80]

The "meaning of the world":

Ich bin, wo der Eichelhäher
zwischen den Zweigen streicht,
einem Geheimnis näher,
das nicht ins Bewußtsein reicht.

. . . .

Ich weiß nicht, welches der Dinge
oder ob es den Wind enthält.
Das Rauschen der Vogelschwinge,
begreift es den Sinn der Welt?

Der Häher warf seine blaue
Feder in den Sand.
Sie liegt wie eine schlaue
Antwort in meiner Hand.[81]

Or a pristine state of pure innocence:

Für die Dauer des Blitzes
gewinnt dein Auge
seine Unschuld zurück:
Der Himmel
ist auf den Grund der Bäume gezeichnet,
die Nachricht für dich ist weiß.[82]

If the poems discussed above were observed completely out of the context of the individual works in which they appear, the impression might easily be gained that Eich was successful at providing poetic intimations of and insights into spheres of a more absolute reality normally hidden to human perception. This impression, however, would be quite false because interposed amongst such poems are others which have as their theme the difficulty or even impossibility of gaining a greater understanding of the "Wirklichkeit" which they are trying to master. An indication of this problem was already to be seen in one of the poems previously quoted:

the invisible "Orte der Welt" about which Eich continually endeavours to create an awareness of are described as being "*nicht* vermessen" and "*un*auffindbar."[83] They are so elusive that they can not be found, let alone explored: their existence can only be inwardly substantiated by blind intuitive conviction.

In Eich's nature lyric also the feeling of being alienated and excluded from the mysteries of the hidden levels of reality which supposedly reveal themselves in the natural world is present as a theme from his earliest poems onwards. Thus, the lyrical subject is very frequently not described as being fully initiated into the secrets which nature contains or as having the capacity to receive mystical insights into them, but, to the contrary, is seen, when observing scenes from nature, to be confronted with an unyielding barrier of incomprehensibility. Images such as the following, for example, convey an attitude of extreme perplexity and a feeling of estrangement and isolation with regard to the natural realm: "Manchmal wird im Sommer aus der Flut / blauen Himmels eine Wolke angeschwemmt, / sie verebbt dann in der Brandung meines Hügels / und schmeckt bitter und nach Meer und gänzlich fremd";[84] "Fremdartiger Herbst / auf moorigem Hochplateau," "Unbegreifliche Luft, / windlos und vogelleer";[85] "Krähen schreiben mit trägem Flügel / eine Schrift in den Himmel, die keiner kennt";[86] "Die Sterne sind mir fremd geworden";[87] "Vieles mag das Auge schauen, / manches sich das Herz erbeuten. / Doch wer kann dem Auge trauen, / weiß das Herz auch

recht zu deuten? // Nimmer faß ichs, ob das Feld, / Wald und Dorf und Baum und Winter, / Bild an Bild ergibt die Welt / oder was sich birgt dahinter."[88] In the poems from which the above quotations are taken, therefore, any possibility of insight into the "higher" forms of reality of which nature is thought to be an inherent part, is totally precluded. No feeling of intimacy between the "Ich" and the sphere of nature is seen to exist, as both are alienated the one from the other. Indeed, in one early poem the idea is expressed that nature, even if it is able to function as a gateway, so to speak, to new insights into different forms of reality, can also be a menacing force, symbolised in this case by a downfall of rain, which causes not a feeling of "Trost" but of disorientation:

> Der Mond wird hochgeschwemmt. Im weißen Stiere
> und in den Fischen kehrt er ein.
> Uns überkommen Wald und Gras und Tiere,
> vergeßne Wege münden in uns ein.
>
> Uns trifft die Flut, wir sind uns so entschwunden,
> daß alles fraglich wird und voll Gefahr.
> Wo strömt es hin? Wenn uns das Boot gefunden,
> was war dann Wirklichkeit, was Wind, was Haar?[89]

It is in the volume Botschaften des Regens, however, that the dilemma of not being able to gain access to "Wirklichkeit" through nature becomes particularly acute.[90] In the majority of the nature poems here the natural world is seen to have almost completely alienated itself from the human sphere and therefore to deny insight into its hidden significance. Thus, in the poem "Der große Lübbe-See," for example, the lyrical subject experiences only "Einsamkeit" and "Verzweiflung" when confronted with the reality of nature.[91] In "Strand mit Quallen" the "hidden meaning" of a natural phenomenon is felt to be indecipherable: "Undeutbar / das rötlich durchscheinende Wappentier, / hieroglyphisch die Inschrift."[92] Also, in the previously quoted poem "Die Häherfeder" from *Abgelegene Gehöfte*, whereas the lyrical subject is given the possibility of understanding the full import of one of nature's emanations--"Der Häher warf seine blaue / Feder in den Sand. / sie liegt wie eine schlaue / Antwort in meiner Hand"[93]--in the later version, "Tage mit Hähern," this opportunity is completely excluded: "Der Häher wirft mir / die blaue Feder nicht zu. //. . . .// Ungesehen liegt in der Finsternis / die Feder vor / meinem Schuh".[94]

That the extreme difficulties of gaining insight into higher spheres of truth form the focal point of attention in *Botschaften des Regens* is highlighted by the fact that the first and the last poems deal with aspects of this theme and therefore act as a kind of framework for the whole collection. In "Ende des Sommers," the first poem, it is cryptically stated that the mysteries which nature contains will only be revealed to man in death: "Es heißt Geduld haben. / Bald wird die Vogelschrift entsiegelt, / unter der Zunge ist der Pfennig zu schmecken."[95] The last poem, "Himbeerranken," however, emphasises with a certain finality that the "language" of nature lies beyond the limits of human comprehension and articulation, and that any new levels of experience which might have been perceived ethereally vanish without trace:

> ach, Himbeerranken aussprechen,
> dir Beeren ins Ohr flüstern,
> die roten, die ins Moos fielen.
>
> Dein Ohr versteht sie nicht,
> mein Mund spricht sie nicht aus,
> Worte halten ihren Verfall nicht auf.
>
> Hand in Hand zwischen undenkbaren Gedanken.
> Im Dickicht verliert sich die Spur.
> Der Mond schlägt sein Auge auf,
> gelb und für immer.[96]

In conjunction with the problem of not being able to comprehend higher levels of reality, certain of Eich's poems voice the theme that, even if it were possible to gain greater insight into concealed areas of truth, human language would prove to be an inadequate vehicle for its expression. Thus, in the poem entitled "Manchmal," for example, the conviction is uttered that if an intimation of "truth" is perceived then the temptation should be resisted to communicate it verbally by means of a "Gespräch" because as soon as that which is instinctively perceived is put into words it loses its full meaning:

> Manchmal wie eine Woge
> treibt ein Gespräch dich fort.
> Kehr zurück in die Monologe!
> Bald wird schal das Wort.
>
> . . . .
>
> Beschworen durch tausend Gespräche,
> Wahrheit, Jahrtausende alt -
> aber wie oft man es spräche,
> immer ist es verhallt.[97]

Seen in a poetological light these lines imply that the language of poetry, itself a form of "Gespräch" between the poet and his reader, can never succeed in its task of providing precise and accurate knowledge of the "absolute," non-empirical aspects of existence. Even the idea, outlined earlier, of "translating" from a mystical "Urtext" would be a second-rate compromise. The same scepticism towards the linguistic medium in this regard is also contained, as Krispyn points out,[98] in the poem "Die Häherfeder," previously quoted in part, where the "Geheimnis" of the "Sinn der Welt" into which the jay seems to be initiated is described as being essentially ineffable. No words can be found to express it:

> Es preßt mir Herz und Lunge,
> nimmt jäh mir den Atem fort,
> es liegt mir auf der Zunge,
> doch gibt es dafür kein Wort.[99]

Introduced in these lines is yet another facet of the problem of obtaining insight into the new areas of reality. In the preceding poems referred to Eich describes both the extreme difficulties which can be experienced when trying to comprehend the other reality as well as the inadequacy of human language for the expression of any understanding which might be gained. In "Die Häherfeder" he goes one step further by suggesting that these problems can actually lead to speechlessness. The lyrical subject, although in possession of an intuitive knowledge of the elusive "Geheimnis," is unable to find the words to express it. This experience takes its breath away, so to speak, and, thus robbed of its speech, is unable to pursue further its quest for mystical illumination. As will become clear, this is also the situation with which Eich's own poetry is occasionally confronted.

It is in the poem "Fragment" from the collection Untergrundbahn, however, that the crisis of poetic articulation and the resulting threat of speechlessness becomes most poignantly expressed as a theme. Here the lyrical subject emphatically states that the search for a language which would unequivocally convey the essence of seemingly indefinable experience and which would give form to that which is intrinsically formless, has been in vain:

> Wörter waren vergebens. Oh Vokabeln der Seele, Versuch,
> ohnmächtiger, zu benennen den Flug der Taube, da schon
> gewiß ward,
> daß die Rose sich färbt unter anderem Zwange, in solcher
> Beugung sich nicht die Berge beugten.
> Noch Stummheit immer, Qual des Schluchzens, die dauert.[100]

This excerpt constitutes an admission that human language can never fully encompass the multifariousness of experience nor the totality of absolute truth. Hence the title of the poem, "Fragment." All poetry which relies on this language can only reproduce isolated fragments of experience, never its entirety, and, as such, it is imperfect, an "ohnmächtiger Versuch." It is the knowledge of this discrepancy between that which is actually verbalised and that which is instinctively perceived to be true that results here in an attitude of defeat and speechlessness.

Although not fully developed as a theme Eich occasionally, however, subtlely alludes to a way out of this dilemma of understanding and expressing higher forms of reality. He mystically suggests that a more perfect kind of communication between man and nature, the latter being understood as a manifestation of the "higher" reality, can exist in silence when human speech has been discarded altogether:

> Deine Schritte sind zu hastig,
> deine Worte, dein Gesicht macht dich gemein.
> Du mußt wieder stumm werden, unbeschwert,
> eine Mücke, ein Windstoß, eine Lilie sein.[101]

In another poem, however, it is recognised that, in the final instance, this would be an impossibility:

> Nie entrinnst du deiner eigenen Gestalt.
> Und keine Sekunde
> gleichst du dem sprachlosen Wind.[102]

Thus there exists in Eich's thought the paradox that silence is both feared and yet secretly wished for: at all events it poses a threat to the written word and thereby to poetry itself.

From the above analysis, therefore, it can be seen that Eich's attempts to create an awareness of and to explore more deeply certain supersensory facets of reality are continually beset with pitfalls. Not only does the gaining of greater insight seem barely feasible but also language itself is regarded as an unsatisfactory means of "translating" into a more tangible form the essential nature of whatever remains of the non-empirical sphere that it is felt can actually be perceived. Accordingly, this other sphere seems gradually to elude the grasp of Eich's poetry, which by Botschaften des Regens more often than not has the tendency to document a feeling of helplessness and failure before it.

An examination of the main thematic areas of Eich's first four volumes of lyric has shown that difficulties are encountered with whichever sphere of reality his poems try to encompass. His pessimistic attitude towards and veiled criticism of human existence as a whole and society in particular lead him to adopt an attitude of weariness and resignation which culminates in a desire to withdraw from the world, "Ich will ausziehen," to desist from speaking about it, "Mein Alter will ich . . . verbringen, ohne Gespräch," and therefore, by implication, to cease making it a subject for poetry.

Concurrent to the depiction of the more negative aspects of existence Eich also seeks to uncover new dimensions of reality which stand in contrast to the impermanence of the finite, man-made world. Certain critics such as S. Müller-Hanpft and H. Ohde are of the opinion that Eich's "other" reality was not at all genuine but artificially contrived as an "Antimodell," an illusory "Gegenbild," a series of "regulative Fiktionen" whose function it was to provide a utopian alternative to society.[103] This hypothesis lacks total credibility, however, because Eich's more "real" reality is not always portrayed in such a straightforward manner as to allow it to be regarded as a positive utopia, an ideal state providing a definite, concrete alternative to society. To the contrary, Eich's lyric from its very beginnings earnestly strives to provide intimations of the other spheres of reality by means of the poetic word, a fact which precludes the idea of their being regarded as simulated products of fiction. Ultimately, however, as was shown, the conclusion is reached that the nature of the other reality is so obscure and enigmatic that it can hardly be perceived, let alone described, and thus the threat of speechlessness arises once again.

By the volume Botschaften des Regens, therefore, Eich seems to have reached a poetological impasse: not only does the poetic word seem impotent in the face of what is taking place in the human world, it is also felt to be an unsatisfactory means of giving expression to concealed areas of truth and more absolute forms of existence.

This same "Problematik" becomes a focal point of attention in Eich's later volumes of poetry and in the next section it will be shown how this leads to a clearly manifested attitude of resignation and the danger of poetic "Verstummen."

2. A Poetological cul-de sac: Zu den Akten (1964), Anlässe und Steingärten (1966), Nach Seumes Papieren (1972).

After Botschaften des Regens (1955) Eich published no more volumes of poetry until Zu den Akten (1964). As several critics have mentioned, the very title of the work connotes a certain tone of finality and resignation.[104] It constitutes a direct admission by Eich that his poetic endeavours to encompass in his lyric the truth of both empirical as well as the more "metaphysical" and "absolute" aspects of reality have progressed no further and may be "put on the shelf," discarded, even forgotten, as there seems to be little hope of further positive development. Thus, this volume, and the other two ensuing ones which are closely connected with it, logically and consistently continue the attitude of poetological scepticism which previously had reached something approaching a climax in Botschaften des Regens. In this way Zu den Akten does not constitute, as H.F. Schafrot would have us believe, a complete "Bruch" from the earlier works,[105] but rather it reiterates more forcefully than before certain of Eich's more negative ideas concerning the validity of his own poetic production. Zu den Akten may therefore be regarded, as will be seen, as the fruition of some of the ideas which had already been sown in Botschaften des Regens.

The volume Zu den Akten can only be thoroughly understood when it is taken into consideration that Eich is undertaking here an exhaustive self-examination of his own poetological standpoint. A close examination of the themes of the work will bring to light how this is carried out and show what new limits Eich's poetological scepticism has reached.

As was the case with the earlier lyric, Eich's later poems have two main subject areas: firstly the possibility of uncovering new dimensions of truth and secondly criticism of the present-day man-made world. Eich's treatment of the former of these will be dealt with first.

Several of the poems of Zu den Akten continue the theme already explored in Eich's first four volumes of poetry concerning the ability of the lyrical subject to gain insight into other aspects of reality which stand in contrast to the time-bound impermanence of the worldly sphere. The poem "Gärtnerei," for example, depicts such a moment of insight:

> Beisammen sind die Zeichen:
> zerstäubendes Wasser lautlos,
> der Lieferwagen,
> vorm Fenster die Stimme,
> die nach der Zeit fragt.
>
> Vergebens sagst du,
> daß es halb vier sei.
> In den Schleiern
> dreht sich die Frage fort,
> fährt durch das Tor
> in Töpfen aus Ton,
> blau, rosa und rot
> durch das taube Ohr.
>
> Du bist am Ort.[106]

Described here is a process in which the lyrical subject seems able to elevate itself inwardly above the merely empirical level of cognition and gain access to a new plane of experience. In this instance it is connected with a region of timelessness. This capacity to escape the temporal and spatial dimensions of empirical reality or suddenly to perceive hidden aspects of it, thereby suggesting that the surface layer of reality is but a gateway, so to speak, to other, more elusive levels of existence, also forms the theme of such poems as "Uferstraße":[107] "Wir wollen nicht warten, / bis die Fragen beantwortet sind. / Wir gehen vor zwei / und dem Hochwasser nach / auf Umwegen, / ohne Zeit"; "Nachhut":[108] "Unsere Worte werden von der Stille aufgezeichnet. / Die Kanaldeckel heben sich um einen Spalt. / Die Wegweiser haben sich gedreht. // Wenn wir uns erinnerten an die Wegmarken der Liebe, / ablesbar auf Wasserspiegeln und im Wehen des Schnees! / Komm, ehe wir blind sind!", and "Sommerfrische":[109] "Lektüre auf Aussichtsbänken, / während am Horizont / die Berge versetzt werden / und die Gasthöfe lautlos zerstäuben. //. . . .// Sichtbar und hinter / Milchglasscheiben / eine leise Veränderung, / niemand bemerkt sie / in seinen Entwürfen. / Das Licht geht an / beim Druck auf den Schalter."

In certain other poems, however, Eich suggests that any insights into a higher world pattern, into that which is not readily accessible to the human senses, can only be partly comprehended because man's perceptive faculties are simply not adequate enough to grasp their full import. Thus, in "Ohne Unterschrift"[110] the conclusion is reached that man is essentially incapable of completely understanding the underlying significance of existence in the midst of his earthly life and can only become fully initiated into its secrets after death, an idea which, as was shown, already found expression in the poem "Ende eines Sommers" from Botschaften des Regens:[111]

Eine Weltordnung durch Schnittblumen
und die gefällige Linie der Waldrände.
Einige Geheimnisse
An Windrädern aufbewahrt,
genug für Klarheit und Überdruß -

Keine Fragen mehr, Einverständnis
überlappt von Tod.

In "Verständlich und nicht" the decision is arrived at by the lyrical subject not even to attempt to understand concretely any flashes of mystical insight which it perceives, symbolised here by the glimmering of light being emitted through an eerie kind of semi-darkness, because this would inevitably distort and falsify their true meaning:

Zugängliche
Minuten weiß ich
genug.
Die rote Lampe
in den durchlöcherten
Malvenblättern.
Laß dies ohne Zeit
unangetastet
von Verstehen.[112]

In these two poems, therefore, Eich is admitting that any insights perceived into concealed areas of understanding are so vague and elusive--"genug für Klarheit und Überdruß," "verständlich und nicht"--so volatile in nature, that they are only barely, if at all, intelligible. Thus he is continuing here the theme already present in his previous works of the difficulties encountered when attempts are made to increase the human faculties of perception in order to make them sensitive to that which is normally considered to be super-sensory experience.

In Zu den Akten, however, Eich goes even one step further than this. He suggests in the first poem of the collection, "Die Herkunft der Wahrheit," that many of the insights into a more absolute form of "Wahrheit" which a good deal of his poetry has tried to present were merely a sham, just a product of the artistic imagination:

> Die Herkunft der Wahrheit bedenken:
> ihre mit Sand behafteten Wurzeln,
> ihre Fußspur,
> die meßbare Bewegung der Luft,
> wenn sie als Vogel kam.
>
> Einsichten aus Pervitin,
> zum Abflug gesammelt mit den Schwalben.
> Fort, fort, in den Abend und übers Gebirge!
>
> Andere, Steinmetzzeichen im Laub,
> nur begreiflich dem Schlafe
> und eins mit den Scherzen der Großmütter:
> Mach die Augen zu,
> was du dann siehst,
> gehört dir.[113]

The first stanza appears to allude to Eich's own earlier nature poetry which, it will be remembered, attempted to show that intimations of higher spheres of reality are present in the world of nature. In the next stanza, however, it is implied that the "insights" which such poetry had as its aim to produce were not a seemingly objective portrayal of truth but rather were artificially induced, and this, of course is not necessarily to be taken literally, by means of drugs, and, as such, had no "absolute" validity. The reference to the drug "Pervitin" here could very probably be a somewhat caustic allusion to ideas put forward by Gottfried Benn in his essay "Provoziertes Leben" (1943). Here it is stated that man, in his desire to obtain an "Überwindung unerträglich gewordener Spannungen, solcher zwischen Innen und Außen, zwischen Gott und Nicht-Gott, zwischen Ich und Wirklichkeit," would be prepared to use drugs or hypnosis to achieve this and create a feeling of harmony for himself: "Pervitin könnte, statt es Bomberpiloten und Bunkerpionieren einzupumpen, zielbewußt für Zerebraloszillationen in höheren Schulen angesetzt werden."[114] In the final stanza Eich continues to disparage even further the worth of the "metaphysical" insights he has tried to evoke by equating them with the frivolous ramblings of old women, and the last three lines constitute that which E. Krispyn calls "a childish but profoundly nihilistic 'joke' which makes the reader supply the missing last word: nothing."[115] That is to say, Eich implies here that if he were to stop producing artificially inspired insights into what are supposed to be higher levels of reality, then the real truth of the situation would become frighteningly apparent, namely, that there are no higher levels of reality, only "das Nichts." In "Herkunft der Wahrheit" therefore, Eich suggests two things: firstly that his bid to give intimations into concealed areas of a more "absolute" reality have amounted to misspent energy because the suspicion has arisen that the existence of this "other" reality cannot be proved, and secondly, that his own powers of poetic perception have been faulty, that he has been seeing things where they simply do not exist. In the poem "Zunahme" Eich goes as far as to mock, admittedly on a much more mundane level, the insufficiency of his own perceptive faculties and even succeeds in turning the seriousness of the situation into a mood of comic bathos:

> Daß es Seegurken gibt,
> macht mich verdrießlich,
> die Frage vor allem:
> Habe ich sie früher
> nicht bemerkt,
> oder sind sie wirklich
> häufiger geworden,
> inzwischen?[116]

When the two poems "Herkunft der Wahrheit" and "Zunahme" are viewed under the same light, it becomes clear that what Eich is essentially saying in them is that if he is unable to perceive such a banal occurrence as the increase in numbers of the humble sea-cucumber, then how can he be expected to gain insight into the deeper levels of the truth of existence? If he cannot do the one, then he will most certainly not be able to do the other.

In the poems quoted above, therefore, Eich is illustrating the complex problems he encounters concerning the more "metaphysical" aspects of his work. On the one hand he still feels able to write poetry which has as its theme the revelation of new spheres of reality, whereas on the other he infers that complete understanding of them is impossible because the human faculties of perception are inadequate. Furthermore, he not only casts doubt upon the validity of his own powers of perception but also on one occasion in the poem "Herkunft der Wahrheit" suggests that the "other" reality about which he has been trying to create an awareness does not, in fact, exist.

In addition to the presentation of the problems which Eich experiences with respect to the possibilities of perceiving more absolute aspects of truth, if it is indeed accepted that they do actually exist, certain of the poems of Zu den Akten have as their theme the inadequacy of poetic language in particular, and art in general, for the expression of such truths. Otto Knörrich also notes the increase of such "metapoems" in Eich's later lyric,[117] which, as has already been seen, were also to be found in the later works of Kaschnitz when she came to the realisation that her own poetry could not effectively carry out the aims for which it was intended.[118] The poem "Verlassene Staffelei" will serve as a representative example of how Eich sums up his own artistic position concerning his endeavours to give expression to that which is essentially inexpressible:

> Es fehlt an Farben.
> Die Geheimnisse
> immer wieder in Grün übersetzt,
> Austausch von Wiesen und Wissen,
> Reisiggefühle,
> lichtloses Madenweiß.
>
> Schattierungen, Ausflüchte
> für graue Ordnungen.
> Der Glaube gehört dem Regenbogen.
>
> Morgen wird sichtbar,
> was jenseits von Violett ist.
> Die Furcht unserer Herzen
> ist die Furcht der Leinwand.
>
> Die Abschiede
> nicht mehr zu verkleinern:
> Wer sieht, sieht nicht wieder.[119]

Described here are the difficulties which the artist encounters with the transmutation of his inner vision of the "Geheimnisse" into artistic form. The image of the painting of the landscape may be regarded in this context as a metaphor for the writing of poetry. Just as the artist realises that he does not have enough colours at his disposal to convey adequately every nuance of the scene which he has before him, so is the poet aware of the insuperable impotence of his artistic medium, language, for the expression of his inner perceptions and thoughts. Both the painter and the poet are forced to realise that in the final instance their finished work inevitably constitutes a very inadequate compromise between that which their senses perceive and that which they can actually express--the complexity of their visions ("Reisiggefühle") can only be translated into images of flaccid colourlessness ("lichtloses Madenweiß"). No matter how subtle and sensitive their attempts may be to convey the exact nuance of what they see, these can at best only be regarded as "Ausflüchte," evasions from the truth, which merely deviate from, elude, and thereby conceal the original clarity of the intuitively experienced vision.

It is this irreconcilable discrepancy between artistic insight and the artistic medium which causes the anonymous artist in this poem to desert his easel, to capitulate and give up creating. The belief is still expressed that in some time in the future art will be able to make visible that which is invisible by using colours which transcend those of the rainbow, "Morgen wird sichtbar, / was jenseits von Violett ist," or, taken in a specifically poetological light, to give utterance to that which is ineffable by means of a language not yet discovered. Nevertheless, for the present, defeat is admitted upon the realisation that this goal is not immediately feasible. Indeed, the artist here actually comes to fear the canvas with which he works because he knows that any attempts to further his aim will only lead to greater feelings of frustration. This renunciation of art also brings with it a kind of spiritual lethargy. The knowledge that the more elusive areas of experience cannot be given full artistic expression causes the artist eventually to give up trying inwardly to perceive them--"Die Abschiede / sind nicht mehr zu verkleinern: / Wer sieht, sieht nicht wieder."

The theme of the inadequacy of the poetic medium and the accompanying spiritual and artistic resignation is also augmented in Zu den Akten in such poems as "Ungültige Landkarte" and "Zum Beispiel."[120] In the first of these the act of writing poetry is metaphorically compared with the drawing and colouring in of a map. Just as the poet attempts to mark out, define and ultimately give articulation to his inner perceptions through the medium of language, so does the lyrical "Ich" of this short poem colour in a map of an anonymous expanse of land. In the second and last stanza, however, this map is seen to be lacking in validity because the lyrical subject's "lieben Spinnen"--an affectionate, humorous reference to Eich's own earlier nature imagery, where spiders as well as all other natural living creatures were regarded as having insights superior to those of man into the secrets of the universe[121]--are described as drawing in a different version, the true one, on top of the original. The lyrical subject, though, rather than trying to rectify his own version of the map in order to guarantee its accuracy, merely seems to adopt an attitude of indifference and leaves--a gesture which implies resignation and defeat, resulting from his awareness that his own efforts will never reach such a high degree of verisimilitude:

> Meine lieben Spinnen
> haben darüber gewebt,
> ein zweites Muster,
> dem ich zustimmte,
> als ich fortging.

In the second poem the possibility of "translating" the essence of an experienced phenomenon into words and of ultimately uncovering "den mystischen Ort / und Stein der Weisen" is described as being fully precluded, and the last two lines end on a jarringly resigned note, continuing a theme already mentioned:

> Aufgabe, gestellt
> für die Zeit nach dem Tode.

As a consequence of being able neither to perceive clearly the hidden truths of existence nor to give them adequate linguistic expression should insight be achieved into them, Eich openly declares in the poem entitled "Nicht geführte Gespräche" that he has relinquished his role as a translator of the mysterious "Urtext," which is supposed to contain the answers to the secrets of life, and has decided to limit himself to an understanding of the more immediate and banal phenomena of his everyday world. As was seen in the humorous poem "Zunahme," he reveals himself as experiencing a great deal of difficulty in comprehending the meaning of even these and thus in "Nicht geführte Gespräche" he suggests that it is mere folly to continue in the belief that more complex forms of existence can be explored and understood:

> Wir bescheidenen Übersetzer,
> etwa von Fahrplänen,
> Haarfarbe, Wolkenbildung,
> was sollen wir denen sagen,
> die einverstanden sind
> und die Urtexte lesen?
> (So las einer
> aus Eulenspiegels Büchern
> die Haferkörner)[122]

It would seem, therefore, from the poems quoted above that Eich has become in Zu den Akten exceedingly sceptical regarding the use of poetry as a means to provide revelation of the "Geheimnisse" of existence. As was seen, the reasons for this scepticism are twofold: firstly, Eich casts grave doubts on his own powers of "mystical" perception, which also leads him to regard as being fallacious the notion that there are any other forms of a more absolute reality, and, secondly, even if it could be assumed that there were, in fact, higher degrees of reality to be uncovered, then the human media of expression could not possibly be commensurate to this task. It is this attitude of scepticism which results in Zu den

Akten in a sharp decline in the mystical nature poetry which was prevalent in Eich's earlier volumes of lyric. Indeed, in the following lines from the poem entitled "Tauerntunnel" he completely rejects his poetry's search for higher planes of reality, implying that it is redundant in a world where suffering predominates and where anything remotely resembling some kind of underlying meaningful order is entirely absent:

> Trochäen, Reime
> vor ungereimten Zimmern.
> Einmal betroffen
> von der Harmonie
> im Gang der Gestirne,
> überhörst du den Seufzer derer,
> die Hungers sterben.[123]

Eich, however, is not merely content in Zu den Akten to declare as being null and void the more "metaphysical" side of his lyric production and all but to exclude it from his work. Rather, he heightens the feeling of having reached a dead-end in this respect by parodying the seriousness of his earlier lyric, specifically his nature poetry, which had as its theme the revelation of hidden aspects of "Wirklichkeit," and thus unmasks that which he has now come to regard as its essential absurdity. The poem "Merkblatt des Tierschutzvereins" is a good example of how he completely debunks in a most dead-pan fashion the serious intent of his former nature lyric:

> Noch regt sich die Fliege im Bernstein,
> die versteinerten Vögel flüstern,
> gestern werden sie ins Haus kommen,
> morgen wurden sie gefüttert,

mit Körnern, Honig und Fischabfall.
Ach, öffne die Türen,
daß die Ameisen freundlich sind
und die Hühner Zeit für uns haben.
Öffne ihnen! Die Schabe
meldet Land unter.[124]

The imagery of the first two lines could easily be contained in one of Eich's earlier nature poems in which all natural phenomena, especially birds and animals, were regarded as mysterious manifestations of another reality which give signs to man that point to a higher plane of truth. Accordingly it was seen to be the duty of mankind to respect and revere the sanctity of the natural realm in recognition of the fact that its power is far greater than his, and also to heed its signs. Thus, the imagery of this poem of the fly stirring in amber and the whispering of petrified birds constitutes an appearance of the "signs"--magical emanations from the "other" world, pregnant with elusive meaning. In the earlier poems such creatures are depicted as being initiated into the secrets of eternity. For them, the concept of time has no meaning as they live in a timeless dimension. This idea is conveyed here by a logically impossible sequence of tenses and temporal adverbs--"yesterday they will enter the house, tomorrow they were fed." If the unsuspecting reader has not yet become aware of the absurdity of the imagery thus far, all doubts are removed from his mind when in the next line he learns that the sacrificial offering which is to be fed to these mysterious harbingers from the other realm consists of the rather unlikely and not a little repulsive mélange of grain, honey and discarded fish gizzards. This communiqué from the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, having in the first five lines alluded to the significance of these creatures of the air and of the garbage dump and of the necessity to offer them succour, then proceeds to utter a plea with almost hysterical earnestness to the effect that man should not be negligent in his theriomorphic duties but allow free access to all manner of crawling and flying things in order that he might gain their patronage and learn their secrets. Thus the whole poem, whose full import can only be understood when seen in the context of Eich's earlier nature poetry, ludicrously suggests that man should show respect to the world of ants, chickens and cockroaches if he is to gain a greater understanding of the enigma of existence.

Another example of a poem from Zu den Akten in which Eich derides the serious intent of his earlier imagery and makes it appear absurd is "Ungewohntes Wort." It will be remembered that formerly Eich frequently projected the idea that certain creatures from the realm of nature, by dint of their mysterious knowledge of the workings of the universe, seem to reprove mankind for its actions and to warn it against pursuing further the disastrous course which it had taken. Here, a rather bizarre collection of fish is seen to be in the process of passing judgement on some anonymous felon and a verdict is now anxiously awaited from these advocates of piscine justice:

Eines Tages der
Fischgerechtigkeit
unterworfen:
Der Spruch der Forellen
mag hingehen.
Wie werden aber
die Aale urteilen
und die Haifische?[125]

Thus, it would appear that in Zu den Akten Eich has come to the conclusion that one important area of his thematic subject matter can no longer be pursued and explored in his poetry because it is now regarded as lacking in any absolute validity. The parodying of his earlier nature lyric may be understood as being the result of Eich's own recognition that he has reached, as far as the "metaphysical" side of his poetry is concerned, the threshhold of speechlessness. Rather than being content to omit completely this particular thematic aspect from his work, that is, to keep it silent, he makes fun of it, showing it to be not just of spurious value but also absurd. These elements of self-parody, then, which will also be encountered in the poetry of Paul Celan, would not have arisen if a poetological cul-de-sac had not been reached and the dangers of speechlessness had not become apparent.

In keeping with this attitude of scepticism towards the ability of poetry to provide insight into hidden truths of existence more and more of the poems of Zu den Akten have as their focus of attention the other main area of Eich's lyrical subject matter, namely, criticism of the modern world in general and contemporary society in particular. In such poems the main aspects which Eich concentrates upon include the complacent brain-washed condition of modern man with regard to those figures in authority who dictate the course of his life, his blind acceptance of and refusal to question the status quo and the fact that no room has been left in the modern world for such things as beauty or aesthetic pleasure because of the overriding attitude that everything must have a practical value. Thus, in the poem entitled "Wildwechsel,"[126] for example, which is dedicated to Nelly Sachs, the ruling powers of Society, called here "Jäger" in direct analogy with the Jewish poetess' classification of the human race as consisting of those who possess one of two distinct types of mentality, namely the "Jäger" or "Henker" and the "Gejagten" or "Opfer,"[127] are depicted as having imposed their own set of values upon the world which is obsequiously adhered to by everyone else. They callously ignore any dissenters against these values:

> Sie kennen die Welt von Anfang her
> und zweifeln nicht an den Wäldern.
> Zu ihren Antworten nickt man,
> und der Rauch ihres Feuers hat recht,
> und geübt sind sie,
> den Schrei nicht zu hören,
> der die Ordnungen aufhebt.

In "Munch, Konsul Sandberg"[128] a veiled criticism is contained of those who do not ask questions about the world around them--they are described as being an "Albtraum der Zuversicht" who would spit upon those who hope to change the situation and draw man out of his spiritual complacency. In addition to this, "Alte Holländer"[129] presents a group of people whose motto for life, "Laß uns weitertanzen / unter Sprichwörtern," shows that they are quite content to dance away their lives, speaking in clichés, unconcerned with the fate of others and with the deeper meaning of their existence. According to Eich everything in the modern world is forced to bow to the dictates of utilitarianism. A use is found for the most seemingly harmless and "useless" objects, thus denying the opportunity to appreciate them in their own right:

> Immer habe ich Brennesseln geliebt,
> und jetzt erfahren,
> daß sie nützlich sind.[130]

In the poem "Weltansichten"[131] he even goes as far as to imply that it is no longer possible to find any saving graces as far as the present-day world is concerned and that one cannot live in it "ohne Verzweiflung."

As in the volume Botschaften des Regens no hope is expressed in Zu den Akten that the future will bring any improvement to this situation. In the poems "Zukunftstraum" and "Topographie einer schöneren Welt,"[132] which are apocalyptic visions of the future, mankind is seen not to have acquired a greater sense of human morality by learning from mistakes made in the past, but rather, the same mistakes are seen to be committed again and again: "Vergeblich die böse Hoffnung, / daß die Schreie der Gemarterten / die Zukunft leicht machen." Thus the future is envisaged as having all the characteristics of a Nazi concentration camp:

Erdacht
bei künstlichem Licht,
verwerfliche Träume,
weil sie Möglichkeiten verrufen:
die Verwendung von Klaviersaiten
in Justiz und Kunst,
die Platanenpyramide
geschmückt mit Erhängten.

As a result of the completely negative picture of the modern world which Eich feels compelled to present in such poems as those quoted above, he tends in Zu den Akten to reinforce an attitude already shown to be present in Botschaften des Regens. In the latter work it was pointed out that in certain poems Eich expresses the desire to instigate a tactical withdrawal from the world and to ignore it completely, thus giving rise to the implication that he stands on the borderline of defeat, having recognised that there is nothing which his poetry can do to alter the situation. In Zu den Akten even more poems evince precisely the same attitude: they have as their theme the rejection of the contemporary world and its institutions and the wish for total isolation from them. The following examples will serve to illustrate this point.

In at least two poems from the collection the opinion is voiced that Western culture and civilisation and the forces in authority which rule them should be both censured and resisted. Thus, in "Fußnote zu Rom" the lyrical subject tersely but decisively declares its complete mistrust of the basic tenets of Western society and its wish to evade them:

Ich werfe keine Münzen in den Brunnen,
ich will nicht wiederkommen.

Zuviel Abendland,
verdächtig.[133]

In "Wildwechsel," which has already in part been quoted, a call is made to cut oneself off from the influence of the "Jäger" and in doing so to actively revolt against them:

Nein, wir wollen fremd sein
und erstaunen über den Tod,
die ungetrösteten Atemzüge sammeln,
quer durch die Fährten gehn
und an die Läufe der Flinten rühren.[134]

Having expressed the desire not to participate in the events of the world around him Eich also writes other poems in which the question is discussed as to whether it would not be better to withdraw altogether and not have anything more to do with society. In "Verzweifelte Hoffnung eines Rasierkunden," for example, the lyrical subject is seen to be engaged in a Hamlet-like debate, uncertain as to if he should "stay" ("bleiben"), that is, to continue his normal existence, or to enter into a state of self-imposed banishment. He eventually seems to come out in favour of the latter:

Bleiben.

Verbannt zu werden

. . . .

wenn man den Wunsch ausspräche,
zu den Stoppeln im Schaum,
zum Fett im Nackenpapier,
dann dann dann
verbannt zu werden,
aber zu bleiben?[135]

The decision to bid farewell to the world, so to speak, also forms the theme of the poem entitled "Erinnerung an eine Zahl" quoted here in full:

Sieben Meilen weiter,
sieben Umarmungen,
gebeugt über Bilanzen
und die Tabelle des Schachturniers.

Sieben Straßen am Flugplatz,
sieben Leuchter weiter,
Gebühren im Konsulat,
Einkauf von bitterem Bier.

Sieben Pakete weiter,
sieben Erwartungen
von Briefen, die
die Welt ändern,
sieben Türklinken zu spät.[136]

The subject matter of the poem circles around the preparations being made by an anonymous lyrical subject who, after much hesitation, is on the point of taking his leave, suggested by the images "sieben Meilen weiter," "Umarmungen," "Straßen am Flugplatz," "Gebühren im Konsulat," and that which he sees and does on the way, "die Tabelle des Schachturniers," "Einkauf von bitterm Bier." The title refers to the figure seven which is repeated in every stanza and which is of central importance to the theme. As an archetypal symbol this number connotes the idea of a thing completed, of a cycle which has completely revolved and has arrived at its point of termination which was also its point of original departure. Here, therefore, it could be taken to denote the idea of finality: all the actions and impressions catalogued here are being carried out and experienced as if for the last time. The reason why the decision to depart has been reached becomes apparent in the final stanza: some indication that the world can be changed has been expected but, as this has proved not to be forthcoming, there is no alternative apart from to leave. Even if a sign were to be given at this stage the point of no return has already been reached: the handle of the exit door has been turned and thus it is "too late" to reverse the decision.

In the four poems just analysed, therefore, it may be assumed that Eich is essentially describing his own personal standpoint with regard to what is considered to be the overwhelmingly negative state of the contemporary world. In the first two poems ("Fußnote zu Rom," and "Wildwechsel"), he voices his own rejection of this world ("Ich will nicht wiederkommen," "Nein, wir wollen fremd sein"), and in the last two he describes the actual process which leads up to the final valediction from it. In the poem "Zu spät für Bescheidenheit" the act of withdrawal is presented as a _fait accompli_:

> Wir hatten das Haus bestellt
> und die Fenster verhängt,
> hatten Vorräte genug in den Kellern,
> Kohlen und Öl,
> und zwischen Hautfalten
> den Tod in Ampullen verborgen.
>
> Durch den Türspalt sehn wir die Welt:
> Einen geköpften Hahn,
> der über den Hof rennt.
>
> Er hat unsere Hoffnungen zertreten.
> Wir hängen die Bettücher auf die Balkone
> und ergeben uns.[137]

Here the lyrical "wir" is described as having fled the outside world, the chaotic state of which is now being tremulously observed from a place of refuge. In the last stanza the reason is given for this retreat: the world and its institutions completely quash the individual's hopes and thus force him to escape if he is in any way at all to preserve his individuality.

Two other poems from Zu den Akten, namely, "Aufgelassenes Zollamt" and "Aussicht vom Spezialkeller," further describe the completed state of withdrawal from the world. In the first of these the position is equated with the sense of benumbed forlornness experienced by a traveller who seems to have been reluctantly forced into exile from his country:

Ein durchschnittliches Gepäck:
Gedanken in Plastikhüllen,
kein Zinn, keine Pfauenfedern,
Einsamkeit, geplättet
im Wäschekoffer.

Hier ist der Ort,
wo wir bleiben.[138]

In the second, the extreme loneliness and the feeling of spiritual atrophy which accompany the situation are emphasised even more:

Kulissen vor meiner Trunksucht
und Rauch in den Etüden für Julia,
keine Erbschaft,
die mich anziehend machte,
und meine Freunde
sind mir noch nicht begegnet.[139]

In the last three poems quoted, which describe in one way or another the rejection of and the completed act of withdrawal from the outside world, there is an unmistakable tone of resignation, emphasised especially in lines such as these--"Wir hängen die Bettücher auf die Balkone / und ergeben uns," "Gedanken in Plastikhüllen /. . ./ Einsamkeit, geplättet / im Wäschekoffer," "und meine Freunde / sind mir noch nicht begegnet." Understood as an expression of Eich's own poetological standpoint concerning the validity of writing poetry about the evils of present-day society when the poetic word is incapable of changing anything, it would appear that these poems are an admission of defeat. They suggest that there is nothing more to be said on the matter and imply that intellectual inertia and poetic speechlessness can be the only consequences.

As is the case, however, with the other poets dealt with in this study, who at one stage or another reach a point of crisis in their artistic development, Eich endeavours not to succumb to the temptation of speechlessness. This he does in the following way. Having expressed as a theme the necessity for withdrawal from the world there is an increasing tendency in many of the poems of _Zu den Akten_ towards hermeticism. That is to say, Eich does not only describe the act of withdrawal, but also the language of his poems themselves seems to withdraw, and his poetry, instead of giving utterance to themes which would be readily intelligible to any reader, becomes more and more inaccessible to a wider understanding. In the speech which he gave on receiving the Büchner prize in 1959[140] Eich gives valuable insight into the reasons for the trend towards the hermetic in literature and that which he regards as its political function. Briefly summarised, he states that radical experimentation with literary language and its inclination towards the vague and esoteric is to be understood as a deliberate act of resistance against a coercive society where each individual is forced to lead an oppressively regulated existence as a result of being subjugated to the totalitarian rule of those in authority. The more dissentient literary language becomes, he maintains, the more effectively does it allow the individual to assert his own sovereignty and his own personal mode of expression against the cliché-ridden sterility of society where freedom of thought is forbidden, the more does it voice an aggressive protest against that society. As he says in his speech:

> Wir wissen, daß die Macht daran interessiert ist, daß alle Kunst die Grenze der Harmlosigkeit nicht überschreitet. Macht widerstrebt der Qualität. Sprache, die über die gelenkte, die von ihr genehmigte, hinausgeht, ist nicht erwünscht. Ihr bloßes Vorhandensein stellt eine Kritik dar, etwas, was der Lenkung und damit der Macht selber widerspricht.
>
> Sprache, damit ist auch die esoterische, die experimentierende, die radikale Sprache gemeint. Je heftiger sie der Sprachregelung widerspricht, um so mehr ist sie bewahrend.[141]

Thus, the tendency for the language of Eich's later poetry to withdraw into its own shell, so to speak, is essentially intended not to represent a gesture of defeat, but, on the contrary, is meant to demonstrate an attitude of fundamental disapprobation of and even retaliation against a society accustomed to conformist thinking. This more hermetic style, which frequently deliberately serves to annoy and perplex a reader who is conditioned to accept blindly that which he reads without really thinking about it, also gives Eich's own poetry the opportunity to resist what might have been the only alternative left open to it, namely, speechlessness. As he states in the "Büchnerrede": "Überhaupt wollen wir lieber unfreundlich sein, ehe wir verurteilt sind zu schweigen."[142]

The characteristics of Eich's hermetic style prevalent in Zu den Akten are best illustrated by means of examples. Certain of the poems of "withdrawal" consist merely of what appear to be haphazard catalogues of esoteric, occasionally grotesque visions. Because of their lack of any determinate frame of reference they defy the precise understanding of the reader. "Unter dem Taurus," which is not even syntactically complete, will serve as a case in point:

> Die seldschukischen Träume
> zu Parkwegen verwirklicht,
> das brüchige Kutschenleder
> ehe es zu Seufzern zerfällt,
> die ich morgen tue:
>
> wenn die Turbane
> von den Sarkophagen genommen,
> die Tonkrüge
> umsonst gekauft sind,
> und in dem Dorf,
> das ich noch nicht kenne,
> Reif in den Schafsfellen hängt.[143]

Others, such as "Eigentlich Griechenmüller," are equally as devoid of any concrete meaning and border on the absurd:

Noch stampft der Müller,
während die Mühle still steht,
mit groben Füßen
die markierten Wege aufwärts.
Ein Wanderer, dem der Bart wuchs,
ein Maler, der mahlt,
während das Korn schimmelt
und ers vom Wasser lernt,
ein einsamer Maler Müller
und mehrfach vertont.[144]

A main feature of these poems of "withdrawal" is their extremely cryptical quality. It is as if Eich occasionally deliberately withholds any "message" which he would wish to convey in the knowledge that if it were to be given full expression it would be ignored by any possible readers. An example of this would be the poem "Panorama in Waterloo" which merely consists of the first two lines of an unpublished version of the same name:

Bleibt im Sandkasten, Kinder!
Wer gab euch preußische Bataillone?[145]

The unpublished version, which consists of seventeen lines, amounts to a sarcastically scathing attack on the absurdity of war and its carnage as a means of preserving and furthering human ideals and on religion which sanctifies such acts of barbarism. In the final version, however, Eich suppresses the essential message: he keeps it to himself, as it were, and instead, offers the reader an almost indecipherable stenograph which could possibly, but by no means definitely, be understood as a call to resist the instigators of needless human bloodshed--"Bleibt im Sandkasten, Kinder!"

It is a notable characteristic of the hermetic poems in Zu den Akten that not only do they "say" and "mean" less and less but they also undergo a process of acute linguistic reduction. "Panorama in Waterloo" is one such a case. The most extreme examples of hermeticism and linguistic reduction amongst the poems of withdrawal are to be found in the sections entitled "Alte Postkarten," "Neue Postkarten" and "17 Formeln."[146] With the "Postkarten," which vary in length from three to eight short lines, Eich no longer writes "poetry" in any established sense of the word but contents himself, instead, with the writing of "postcards," that is, telegrammatic messages which give cryptic utterance to impressions and thoughts experienced and apparently haphazardly noted down from the isolated outpost of self-imposed exile. Only occasionally do these postcards express some kind of concrete meaning, as in the following example, which refers to a standard theme of Eich's socially critical poems, namely, the sterile thoroughness with which everything is neatly planned and compartmentalised in modern society by those in authority:

> Der Ausblick, allmählich
> verfärbt von Leim,
> Deckblätter und Straße
> zerschnitten
> vom selben Messer.
> Die Asphaltierung ist
> geplant wie das Sterben.[147]

For the most part, however, they reach new heights of abstruseness and completely defy any attempts at interpretation, for example:

Blasrohre am Sedantag,
drei null vier,
ein Rot in den Linden.
Morgen morgen morgen.[148]

The "17 Formeln" go even further than the extreme hermeticism and linguistic reduction of the "Postkarten" and are the culmination of Eich's poems of withdrawal. They are all only one line in length, occasionally consisting of merely one nonsense-word. Only sporadically do flashes of meaning shine through, as in "Formel 10", for example,--"Lachreiz vor Säulen"--which, as J.P. Wallmann points out, is a highly condensed form of the poem "Fußnote zu Rom" with its theme of scepticism and mistrust of the established institutions of Western culture.[149] Most of the "formulae," however, do not yield to any kind of interpretation, and, as the following examples show, merely seem to be absurd just for absurdity's sake: "Fischbeinschwäche" ("16. Formel"), "Hortisilur" ("17. Formel").

As several critics have indicated, but not necessarily fully explained, Eich's "Formeln" graphically stand on the threshold of poetic speechlessness.[150] So vacuous have they become both with regard to their language as well as their meaning that they seem to be on the verge of complete disintegration into nothingness. As has been stated, Eich originally regarded the act of withdrawing his poetry into a hermetic world not as being a gesture of poetological capitulation before the predominantly negative aspects of society but rather it was meant to be a last attempt to voice an indirect protest against them, a way for him as an individual to resist succumbing to what would otherwise be the necessity to fall silent. It is highly ironical, therefore, that the hermetic poems find themselves forced almost into that very state which it was their purpose to overcome. The extent to which they have been withdrawn, so to speak, has proven to be too great and thus they attest to their own imminent collapse. Poetic withdrawal as a gesture of defiance, therefore, would appear to be self-defeating. Rather than functioning as an effective means of protest it ultimately puts into question the actual writing of poetry itself, for it is obvious that it can lead nowhere as it offers no possibilities for further development. The course on which such poetry of withdrawal is steered can logically only lead to speechlessness.

Thus, in Zu den Akten Eich seems again to have reached a poetological impasse in the second main area of the subject matter of his lyric. That he was not unaware of the fact that he had exhausted all the possibilities of his "political" poetry is manifested in this volume, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, with the use of caustic humour. Just as he comes to mock and parody his more "metaphysical" poetry upon realising that its fundamental tenets were spurious, so does he also in certain poems of Zu den Akten make fun of the attitude of withdrawal, showing it, too, to be absurd and without any concrete validity. In the poem "Unterirdisch" for example, the theme of the tactical withdrawal from the world is not dealt with in serious terms, but, to the contrary, a ridiculous effect is achieved when the anonymous lyrical subject is described as bidding the world adieu not by means of some dramatic action but by clattering down the stairs in wooden clogs into the coal cellar where he will await the onset of better days:

> Die Treppe, die zu den Kohlen hinabführt, -
> adieu!
> Noch klappern die Holzschuhe,
> dann zwischen gelesenen Zeitungen
> ein Rest von Zukunft,
> Hohlmaße und Hasenspuren,
> ein Muster aus Luft
> für die Müdigkeit
> und fernes Geschrei, adieu,
> für gute Tage.[151]

In "Brüder Grimm" the image of the cellar is also used to describe the place of withdrawal. Here a group of "gebrannten Kinder" are seen to have sought shelter from the dangers of the outside world, symbolised by a "Brennesselbusch" and the stinging pain which it can inflict. These "children" who have been deserted by their parents are totally isolated and are promptly joined by a motley troupe of animals who help them "dig in," as it were, in order to resist the perils from without and provide them with such material comforts as bread rolls and a television guide so that their exile might be made slightly more bearable:

> Brennesselbusch.
> Die gebrannten Kinder
> warten hinter den Kellerfenstern.
> Die Eltern sind fortgegangen,
> sagten, sie kämen bald.

Erst kam der Wolf,
der die Semmeln brachte,
die Hyäne borgte sich den Spaten aus,
der Skorpion das Fernsehprogramm.

Ohne Flammen
brennt draußen der Brennesselbusch.
Lange
bleiben die Eltern aus.[152]

Thus, the act of withdrawal is accorded here the same validity as a fatuous fairy-tale which borders on the imbecilic.

Other such poems in which Eich seems to deride his position as an outsider include "Tragtasche" and "Huhu."[153] In the former the lyrical subject with all his idiosyncrasies is depicted as a kind of "komischer Kauz" figure who is giggled at behind his back by the uninitiated because of their amusement at his eccentricities. In the latter, which is directly addressed to the reader, Eich makes it clear that his act of withdrawal resembles nothing more than a childish game of hide-and-seek:

Wo die Beleuchtung beginnt,
bleibe ich unsichtbar.
Aus Briefen kannst du mich nicht lesen
und in Gedichten verstecke ich mich.

Den letzten Schlag
gab ich euch allen.
Mich triffst du nicht mehr,
solang ich auch rufe.

The absurdity of such poems seems to nullify those others of serious intent: it would appear that Eich is experiencing difficulties in accepting the credibility of his position, for at every way and turn his use of humour practically amounts to an abrogation of his own poetic standpoint.

In Zu den Akten, therefore, Eich has outlined all the aspects of his poetological position. He renounces the principles of his earlier nature poetry and then proceeds to produce caricatures of it. The more "political" side of his work also fares no better. Having come to the conclusion that direct criticism of the world serves no useful purpose the decision is made to retreat from it into a hermetic sphere and so to offer a form of indirect criticism by demonstrating an attitude of defiance. This also is felt to be ineffectual, for the more the language of poetry withdraws the less does it ultimately mean: it reaches a point where it almost lapses into speechlessness and consequently defeats its own purpose. Unable to break this vicious circle, the attitude of withdrawal itself is then derided. The poem "Gespräche mit Clemens" conveys a mood of tired resignation as a result of the recognition that all possibilities have been discussed, yet no solution has been found:

> Nun ist alles besprochen,
> die Zukunft der Freunde,
> die Pflasterung,
> die Anfänge mit Vogelvau.
>
> Nun ist alles besprochen
> bis ans Ufer, wo sie angeln.
> Alle Brücken wie in Avignon,
> halb und sie tanzen darauf.
>
> Nun ist alles besprochen,
> die Urkunden und die Schwermut,
> Versuche in Wasserfarben, Versuche
> mit Scheunenschlüsseln und Schnee.[154]

It would seem that after this, there would be nothing more to be said.

Surprisingly enough, however, Eich does not fall silent as far as his poetry is concerned after Zu den Akten, but rather, in his last major collection of verse, Anlässe und Steingärten (1966), he continues with the same poetological standpoint he had earlier developed. This need only be briefly summarised here.

Having already come to the conclusion that poetry is an inadequate vehicle for the revelation of hidden aspects of a more universal reality there are no "metaphysical" poems in Anlässe und Steingärten. The only "nature" poem in the collection is the three-lined "Ode an die Natur" whose sardonic tone sums up Eich's sceptical attitude towards such poetry:

> Wir haben unsern Verdacht
> gegen Forelle, Winter
> und Fallgeschwindigkeit.[155]

As a consequence even more attention is focused on the other main sphere of Eich's poetic subject matter, namely, the concrete contemporary world and either obvious or oblique criticism of it. Several of the poems have as their theme direct criticism of certain aspects of modern society which Eich had already treated in his previous work.[156] For the most part, however, Anlässe und Steingärten evinces the same attitude of "withdrawal" as a means of preserving the integrity of the individual and of voicing an indirect protest as did Zu den Akten. Once again a number of the poems describe the necessity for withdrawal, for example "Hoffnungen":

Ich habe meine Hoffnung
auf Deserteure gesetzt.[157]

Or they portray the actual process of leave-taking, for example "Elfenbein"

Laß nun die Abschiede
uns unauffällig
begehen,
wir fahren single,
weich, ohne Paßkontrolle,
laß uns fahren . . . .[158]

Or else they present this action as a *fait accompli*, for example "Kleine Tochter"

Mirjam hat mir ein Haus gebaut
aus Bananen und Wachstuch.
Da bleibe ich,
da erwarte ich alles,
Scrabble und Atemnot,
Labskaus und jedes
andere Gericht,
auch das jüngste.[159]

As a result of this attitude Eich continues to "withdraw" the language of his poems, so to speak, which are often equally as hermetic as those in his previous volume. From the "metapoem" "Weniger" it becomes clear that Eich regards his esoteric poetry as being a series of what he calls "meditations"--a presentation of a variety of his own introverted thoughts which makes little attempt to communicate with a reader:

Weniger Ziele
und kleiner,
reiskorngroß.

Nicht aufwendig,
das meiste in
Meditationen[160]

Indeed, the title "Anlässe und Steingärten" refers to the method Eich employs in many of these poems. In a note to his publisher he explains the word "Anlässe" ". . . bezieht sich darauf, daß die Mehrzahl der Gedichte aus einem Anlaß geschrieben, Widmungs- Erinnerungs-, 'Gelegenheits'- gedichte sind."[161] The word "Steingärten," as Horst Ohde states, refers to ". . . die altjapanischen Meditationsstätten, in denen durch ein ausgeklügeltes Arrangement von Steinblöcken in einem Sandgeviert eine künstliche Miniaturlandschaft entsteht."[162] Thus, many of the poems comprise Eich's own innermost thoughts concerning a multitude of "Anlässe" which are arranged in an order which is meaningful to himself. These "Anlässe" range from a flight over the forests of British Columbia,[163] to memories of a brickworks,[164] to the reading of headlines about Khrushchev and Kennedy.[165] More often than not, however, the original impetus for the writing of these poems is not readily discernible from their individual contexts, and so they frequently remain inaccessible to the reader.

As in Zu den Akten the language of many of the poems of Anlässe und Steingärten also becomes greatly reduced. Eich even describes the development of his poetry of withdrawal towards hermeticism and extreme linguistic contraction in another metapoem, "Entwicklung" which, logically enough, is itself hermetic and staccato-like in tone:

Verzögerungen erfinden,
Relais einbauen,
Umwege, Aufenthalte, Wartesäle.

Kann, soll und muß,
und kreuzungsfrei,
im Hundert, vom Hundert, auf Hundert.

Und schließlich einsilbig,
Buchstaben, Interjektionen
zusammenschrumpfend,

Hinweise auf Wörterbücher,
Journale, der Vorzug
von Sprachfehlern.[166]

The final stages of the poems of withdrawal are the sections entitled "Alte Postkarten" (6-11), "Neue Postkarten" (6-9) and the extremely terse "Formeln" (18-25) which follow on numerically from those of the previous volume.[167] A section entitled "Lange Gedichte" is also included.[168] By dint of the fact that the lengths of the poems therein contained vary from merely three to six short lines, commentators have pointed out[169] that they are meant to be an ironical reaction to Walter Höllerer's call for "long poems" at a time when poetical brevity, far from being the soul of wit, only seemed to be leading to artistic sterility.[170] With his "Lange Gedichte" Eich is implying, then, that in his case at least the writing of long poems is an impossibility as a result of the position of withdrawal into which he has retreated. Thus, in Anlässe und Steingärten Eich reaches once again the threshold of speechlessness, a poetological impasse which would seem to presage the end of the more "political" aspect of his lyrical creativity. That Eich was fully aware of the dilemma into which his poetry now finds itself is made manifest in the collection by certain poems which evince a tone of scepticism and resignation. In "Weniger," for example, he implies that his hermetic "meditations" are indeed impotent and ineffectual as a means of defiant protest: they are described as being--

> Für Armut schon
> geeignet und
> Zahnlosigkeit[171]

In the "long poem" which is sarcastically entitled "Zuversicht" the effectiveness of his poetry is once again put into question when he states that it is virtually ignored by the reading public:

> In Saloniki
> weiß ich einen, der mich liest,
> und in Bad Nauheim.
> Das sind schon zwei.[172]

However, it is in the final poem of the collection, "Ryoanji", ironically the longest he ever published, that Eich voices most poignantly his attitude of weariness as regards his own position and describes state of near-speechlessness into which he has been forced. Here he implies that he is tired of trying to develop new ways of expressing himself, is frustrated at not having achieved any positive results and, what is more, he seems to be exasperated with himself for having landed in this dilemma:

> Und nun Wand an Wand
> mit Sprachtheorien,
> Wand an Wand
> hustet mit Goldzähnen meine Traurigkeit,
>
> . . . .
>
> überall ende ich,
> sorgenvoll bewegen
> meine Zehen im Finstern,
> das Finstere,
> ich bedaure mich,
> ich bin nicht einverstanden mit meinen Zehen
> nicht einverstanden mit meinem Bedauern[173]

Although he realises that his poetry is powerless to alter the negative situation which is prevalent in the world, he still feels the need to resist, to make a personal stand against the injustices around him, even if this, by necessity, entails approaching the state of speechlessness. In this poem he compares his situation to that of "die Igel unter den Gebüschen, / fast stumm," relatively harmless and docile animals, who, when aroused, are nevertheless capable of making their presence felt and of even inflicting injury. At the conclusion of the poem Eich describes his poetological position as being one of passive resistance, suggesting that if his work cannot alter the chaos of the world then at least it can foster an attitude of disagreement with it:

> Ein entschlossener Clan, verharren wir
> mit unsern Igeln
> im zugespitzten Augenblick,
>
> . . . .
>
> wir lehren unsere Töchter und Söhne die Igelwörter
> und halten auf Unordnung,
> unseren Freunden mißlingt die Welt.

In Anlässe und Steingärten, therefore, Eich continues to document the same poetological impasse which had also threatened to undermine the tenets of his previous poetry. "Metaphysical" nature poetry is excluded because the conclusion had already been reached that the uncovering of concealed aspects of a higher reality by means of the poetic word was an impossibility. Poetry as a means of commentating on and reacting against the empirical "political" world also proves in the final instance to be ineffectual and self-destructive. These two divergent areas of Eich's poetic subject matter--the "metaphysical" and the "empirical"--thus converge in that ultimately they both cause his lyric to reach an irreversible stale-mate, manifested in the tendency towards speechlessness.

With the exception of a small number of poems, which appeared individually in various periodicals, and the collection Nach Seumes Papieren (1972) consisting of ten short texts, Eich published no more lyric. The latter volume adds nothing new to his basic poetic themes. H.F. Schafroth points out that most of the poems deal in one way or another with "Abschied und Sterben," and that "eine furchtbare Verletztlichkeit"[174] is the predominant mood. The overall tone of resignation is caused by the fact that here Eich can only document his desire to turn away from the world:

> Erfahrungen abdrehen
> und ungehemmt
> zählen bis
> 93, auch weiter.[175]

He also laments that his hermetic poetry of withdrawal has not come any nearer in fulfilling the function for which it was intended:

> Ich dachte, ich schriebe für zwei.
> Aber diese vertrackte
> an Nadelholzzweigen hängende Schrift![176]

Thus in Nach Seumes Papieren Eich testifies once more to the failure of his poetry in a "political" sense. All the possibilities of his lyrical production have been exhausted and the brink of speechlessness has once again been reached.

The final achievements of Eich's literary career are his Maulwürfe, a new form of expression which, as Müller-Hanpft states, results from "einem Impuls aus der Situation des Verstummens von Lyrik."[177] In these he continues to propagate his attitude of defiance against the world from his vantage point of withdrawal, turning more and more to the use of grotesque and absurd humour, realising that the chaos and tragedy of the modern world can only be accepted if they are laughed at. As he writes: ". . . Kalauer sind keine Steigerung von Calau. Aber mir sind sie recht. Eine Möglichkeit, die Welt zu begreifen, vielleicht die einzige, anspruchslos und lila."[178]

This analysis of Eich's poetic development has shown, therefore, that in its final stages he came to regard his lyric with extreme scepticism as he felt that it could not adequately carry out whatever task it was assigned. Indeed, the impression is gained that much of his later lyric is about the impossibility of writing poetry, a position which, it goes without saying, could not remain artistically fruitful for long and which ultimately all but caused him to give up producing poetry completely.

CHAPTER IV

NELLY SACHS

Wieder hat einer in der Marter
den weißen Eingang gefunden

Schweigen - Schweigen - Schweigen -

Die innere Sprache erlöst
welch ein Sieg -

Wir pflanzen hier Demut -
("Grabschrift," from Noch feiert Tod das Leben)

The poetry of Nelly Sachs, published during the years 1947-1971,[1] has, like that of Günter Eich's, two main subject areas, namely, the concrete empirical world and also a non-empirical, metaphysical dimension. Whereas, however, there is an increasing tendency in Eich's lyric to concentrate upon the real social and political world, Sachs' poetry delves deeper into the nature of an "absolute" reality of which normal everyday existence is only a part. Set against the background of the social, moral and spiritual collapse of human values and institutions brought about by the holocaust of the Second World War, the poetry of Nelly Sachs is essentially to be regarded as an attempt to restore the knowledge, now lost in what she regards to be the present "age of night," "Nachtalter,"[2] of man's position within the higher divine order of the universe. Its basis is a kind of religious mysticism whose task is the revelation of the fundamental unity between the human and the divine, the "Diesseits" and the "Jenseits."

Sachs' poems depict primarily confrontations with an "invisible universe," a higher sphere of reality which is at once a land of the Dead and the region of divine mystical rebirth. In the words of Walter Berendsohn, the poems are "Entdeckungsfahrten hinein in eine Welt, die mit den Sinnen allein nicht zu fassen ist."[3] The purpose of these journeys of discovery into the transcendental is the never failing hope that death and suffering on earth, no matter how senseless they at first seem, may be given a meaning. Nelly Sachs was of the belief that man is the inhabitant of two worlds: the empirical world of the senses and the universal world of the spirit where the soul existed before birth and to which it will return after death. In order that the former be understood it is necessary to develop a consciousness of the latter, for it is here that divine illumination exists and the solution to life's mystery is to be found.

Nelly Sachs' poetry strives to develop such a consciousness: if everything in the empirical world is viewed from the realm of the spirit then its ultimate meaning will become transparent. Suffering and pain will be seen as gateways to eternal salvation and death as the entrance to eternal life. She regarded her one poetic theme as being: "die Verwandlung der Materie in das uns jenseitige Verborgene"[4]--the metamorphosis of the concrete into the spiritual in order that its place within a universal pattern be made visible. She saw her poetry as being a series of what she called "Grenzüberschreitungen,"[5] that is, she used the poetic word as a vehicle with which to transport human empirical consciousness from the "Diesseits" to the divine and absolute "Jenseits" and thus facilitate insight into the two spheres from a "transcendental" viewpoint.

Sachs' poetry, however, finds itself prone to speechlessness for two main reasons: firstly because of the difficulties of verbalising what the poetess considered to be the unspeakable cruelty of the human world, and secondly, as a result of experiencing the limitations of language when it is used to give expression to the metaphysical aspects of existence. She attempted with her poetry to overcome the overpowering threat of speechlessness which arose when she tried to describe the empirical world by pointing the way to a more "absolute" reality and thus provide spiritual consolation, but this, too, was ultimately destined for failure because of the inadequacy of the linguistic medium.

The phenomenon of speechlessness in the poetry of Nelly Sachs will be dealt with in the following way. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first of these analyses the theme present in many of Sachs' poems of the occurrence of "Verstummen" before the horrors which have been committed in the world and that of the decay of language itself, which, according to Sachs, resulted from the abuse of human and spiritual values. The incidence of these two phenomena, namely, "Verstummen" and "Wortzerfall," forms an important background to Sachs' poetry for her lyric is to be regarded in many respects as an attempt to overcome them. However, it will be shown that occasionally certain poems, when they try to articulate the traumatic visions of human "Angst" and suffering considered to be inherent to the general state of decay of the contemporary world, themselves syntactically disintegrate into that very state of speechlessness which they are striving to avoid.

The second section analyses the main objective of Sachs' poetry, namely, to describe how it is possible to transcend spiritually earthly reality and gain awareness of a divine cosmic reality, an ineffable dimension of nothingness and silence, which offers escape from the torments and tribulations of the mundane sphere and which contains the key to life's mysteries. In conjunction with this, it will be shown how Sachs often uses her poetry as a means of articulating the silence of this utopian "Schweigereich," as she calls it, in order to vivify its presence and make it more tangible.

In the final section, however, it is seen that many of Sachs' poems frequently have the tendency to capitulate before their task of giving articulation to the transcendental sphere and thus, once again fall prey to the dangers of poetic "Verstummen."

1. "Verstummen" and the Decay of Language in the Modern World: the Background to the Poetry of Nelly Sachs.

i) The Theme of Speechlessness before empirical Reality and its stylistic Manifestation.

Nelly Sachs, the Jewess forced into exile from her native Germany as a result of Nazi persecution, experienced most forcefully the shock of being driven into speechlessness because of the terror to which she was personally subjected. In the prose text Leben unter Bedrohung[6] she makes an autobiographical reference describing the benumbing state of speechlessness which overcame her after having been interrogated by the Gestapo shortly before her flight to Sweden: "Fünf Tage lebte ich ohne Sprache unter einem Hexenprozeß. Meine Stimme war zu den Fischen geflohen. Geflohen ohne sich um die übrigen Glieder zu kümmern, die im Salz des Schreckens standen. Die Stimme floh, da sie keine Antwort mehr wußte und 'sagen' verboten war."[7]

The theme of the speechlessness which accompanies the experiences of "Angst" and suffering is frequently present in Sachs' poems, both in the early as well as in the later works. On the one hand it is described on a more personal level, as in the following:

> Als der große Schrecken kam
> wurde ich stumm -
> Fisch mit der Totenseite nach oben gekehrt
> Luftblasen bezahlten den kämpfenden Atem (GR II)[8]

Whilst on the other, it is depicted as being a common experience shared by all those who have been the victims of torment and cruelty and who suffer as a result. The biblical figure of Job, for example, is described as having undergone such an experience:

> O du Windrose der Qualen!
>
> . . . .
>
> Deine Stimme ist stumm geworden,
> denn sie hat zuviel Warum gefragt.
>
> Zu den Würmern und Fischen ist deine Stimme eingegangen.
> (WdT)[9]

--as are also old men, victims of the Nazi holocaust, whose voices have become silent as a result of the horrors which they have witnessed or have personally experienced:

> Ihr Mund hat ein Dorn verschlossen,
> ihre Sprache ist an ihre Augen verlorengegangen,
> die reden wie Brunnen
> darin ein Leichnam ertrunken ist. (WdT)[10]

At a time of suffering people are unable to put into words the unspeakable horrors which take place simply because they defy description:

> O du Drama schwarze Zeit
> mit unendlichem Gerede
> hinter dornverschloßenem Mund. (FlV)[11]

Indeed in Sachs' poems the impression is given that the whole world has been shocked into a state of benumbed speechlessness because of the terrible deeds which have been performed on it. No longer does the night offer solace and act as a gateway to a higher reality in the Romantic sense but rather it is seen to resemble more an immense graveyard which engulfs the earth:

> Nacht, Nacht,
> jetzt bist du der Friedhof
> für eines Sternes schrecklichen Schiffbruch geworden -
> sprachlos taucht die Zeit in dir unter
> mit ihrem Zeichen:
> Der stürzende Stein
> und die Fahne aus Rauch! (WdT)[12]

The only sounds that can be uttered by the victims of the needless cruelty which has become so widespread on earth are screams. The entire world is described as having been transformed into a "Landschaft aus Schreien."[13] As a result, the language of those who have managed to survive has become mutilated.[14] They are even unable to articulate words of consolation.[15]

Such is the picture of the human world which Sachs paints in her poetry, a picture which not only refers to the atrocities committed in the Second World War but to all ages. Man is seen to live in a state of constant fear, an experience which even robs him of his speech.

This theme of the speechlessness which accompanies the universal feeling of "Angst" which has pervaded the world is also complemented in many of Sachs' poems by stylistic disintegration. All of her works contain nightmarish visions of the terror which in her eyes seems to have permeated the modern world, and when certain of her poems attempt to express this, their style and form frequently have the tendency to dissipate into barely coherent fragmentation. Thus such poems are themselves threatened with speechlessness. The following piece taken from the collection Noch feiert Tod das Leben will serve as an example to demonstrate the stumbling language and the halting style of those poems which hover on the brink of disintegration when attempting to give utterance to the demonic reality of death and destruction and the feeling of overwhelming "Angst" which for Sachs were the hallmark of the present age:

> Die Augen zu -
> und dann -
> die Wunde geht auf
> und dann -
>
> Man angelt mit Blitzen
> O
> die Geheimnisse des Blutes
> O
> für die Fische
> Alles im Grab der Luft
> Opfer
> Henker
> Finger
> Finger
>
> Das Kind malt im Sarg mit Staub
> den Nabel der Welt -
> und im Geheg der Zähne hält
> der Henker den letzten Fluch -
> Was nun?[16]

Described here is a situation typical of Nelly Sachs' poems. It is an interior vision, one which is perceived in the mind's eye after the outer world has been closed off. This particular vision is not experienced by any precisely identifiable lyrical subject, but rather by an impersonal "man." Thus it is lifted to the level of a more universal objective experience.

That which is visualised here, however, is not the soothing, romantic dream-like state that one would perhaps normally associate with the act of closing off one's vision from the outside world, but rather it is a surrealistic panorama of death, an image of all-consuming pain, evoked by the word "Wunde." The horrific deeds which once took place in the external world cannot even be obliterated when an attempt is made to close them off. The vision encompasses that which Sachs considered to be the basic relationship between all living things on earth, a relationship, which, according to many of her poems, is still prevalent in the present age, namely, that of the executioner and his helpless victim, the hunter and the hunted, the pursuer and the pursued.[17] Here, this grotesque situation is seen to continue even after death: even in the "Grab der Luft" the relationship of the executioner and his victim is perpetuated.

In the second stanza a reason is given for the necessity of experiencing such visions. It is implied that this dark region of death and pain must be explored if the "Geheimnisse des Blutes," that is, if the mysteries of life, are to be explained to those who are still silently suffering on earth, symbolised by the image of the fish, so that their torment may be in some way vindicated. As Olof Lagercrantz points out, the metaphor of the "fish" is often used by Sachs as a cipher for martyrdom, for those who suffer.[18]

In the final stanza, however, it is indicated that there is no justification for suffering in earthly life, for even in death the executioner still lies in wait for his victim. The dead child, a frequent image with Nelly Sachs, which metaphorically connotes the idea of hope and rebirth and which is often connected with the "Opfer" motif,[19] still points the way to new life (it paints "den Nabel der Welt"), and yet the executioner still nurtures feelings of violence towards it. Indeed, it is implied that he will finally overcome his victim--"der Henker (hält) den letzten Fluch."

Thus the poem depicts what Sachs considered to be a fundamental pattern in the behaviour of all living things, namely the confrontation of the "Opfer" and "Henker," a continuously warring interplay of two diametrically opposed forces, life and needless death or innocence and goodness on the one hand, and wanton evil on the other. Because of this situation human life is seen to resemble an open wound which never heals, not even after death. Instead of finding at the basis of this a reason for human suffering, no answer is found: the innocent will still continue to suffer and there is the constant threat that in the final instance evil will triumph.

The style of the poem reflects the feeling of helplessness experienced in the face of such terrifying knowledge. In the first stanza the dashes impede the flow of the description of the impending vision. They convey a sense of hesitation, even of reluctance, to proceed further. The poem reaches a point where its language hovers on the brink of disintegration as a result of not being able to express its overwhelming subject matter. This danger, however, is momentarily averted by a rapid quickening of pace. It is as if the poem is trying breathlessly to express the totality of its vision before the possibility of speechlessness arises again. There is no place here for long drawn out evocation and so the language becomes finally reduced to single one-word images--"Opfer / Henker / Finger/ Finger"--which act as a kind of greatly compressed synecdoche, condensing a whole range of experiences into a series of short, sharp, panicky outbursts. The breathless rhythm of this stanza is also brought about by the lack of punctuation pauses. Each statement seems to overlap into the next.

In the last stanza, however, where the finality of the stalemate position in the relationship between the "Opfer" and "Henker" is depicted, the rhythm of the poem slows down once more. The renewed use of dashes produces a stumbling, stammering effect, until the poem comes to a sudden halt. It ends with a question--"Was nun?"--and thus attests to its own helplessness. It is unable to proceed further, unable to master linguistically its own subject matter and so culminates in a gesture of speechlessness.

The use of dashes, question marks and stumbling language is frequent in those poems of Nelly Sachs which aim to encompass the theme of the horrors of what was considered to be man's existential position as outlined above, a position that was highlighted by the events of the Second World War. Gisela Dischner also notes the use of the dash which, as was shown, is often used to signal the impending danger of linguistic disintegration:

> Der Gedankenstrich findet sich fast in jedem zweiten Gedicht, er erscheint als die verzweifelte Sprachgebärde des Verstummens, das Abbrechen des sprachgestischen Tanzes . . . . Durch den unvermittelten Stillstand im Gedankenstrich erscheint kein Ende - nur ein Abbruch des Gedichts: es läßt sich nicht weitersprechen, weil "die Worte fehlen," das Ungeheuerliche, das wahrhaft Un-sagbare zu sagen. Das Satzzeichen drückt hier eine ganz symbolische Handlung aus.[20]

Not only do dashes merely occur at the end of completed lines but also, as Dischner further explains, in the middle of a word, thus breaking it off before it can be fully articulated and thereby conveying even more forcefully the experience of "Verstummen" as a result of the painful nature of what is to be expressed, for example,

> Schritte -
> Urzeitspiel von Henker und Opfer,
> Verfolger und Verfolgten,
> Jäger und Gejagt - (StVd)[21]

The state of speechlessness, regarded as a consequence of the shock experienced by those who have been subjected to the immense mental anguish which seems to have become the fate of the human race to endure, forms one important aspect to the background of the poetry of Nelly Sachs. Her poems, however, do not only objectively portray the "Verstummen" of others, but also they themselves have the tendency to lapse into speechlessness. They, too, are unable to put into words the horrors with which they are confronted, a situation which, it goes without saying, could ultimately lead to poetic defeat.

ii) The Decay of Language.

Another important aspect to the background against which Sachs' poetry is written is what she considered to be the decay and disintegration of human language, resulting from the decay and disintegration of modern society and its ethical as well as religious beliefs. The poem "Völker der Erde" from the volume Sternverdunkelung contains, as W.V. Blomster points out,[22] a key to an understanding of Nelly Sachs' concept of language which essentially has its roots in mystical thought. The following excerpt from the poem will be used to outline this:

> Völker der Erde,
> O daß nicht Einer Tod meine, wenn er Leben sagt -
> und nicht Einer Blut, wenn er Wiege spricht -
>
> Völker der Erde,
> lasset die Worte an ihrer Quelle,
> denn sie sind es, die die Horizonte
> in die wahren Himmel rücken können
> und mit ihrer abgewandten Seite
> wie eine Maske dahinter die Nacht gähnt
> die Sterne gebären helfen -[23]

The stanzas quoted here constitute a plea directed to all men on earth that they do not destroy language by misusing it, that they do not alter the real meaning of words and thus make language a vehicle for the expression of hypocritical untruth. The images employed in the first stanza call to mind the deceitful and perfidious use of language prevalent under the National Socialist regime which, in one breath, promulgated the ideals of peace whilst simultaneously being actively engaged in spreading hatred and death.

The reason for Sachs' concern for the preservation of the purity of language is connected with her mystical belief that all words are essentially manifestations of the Divine, that together they all form the one ineffable name of God, the Logos, and point the way to an understanding of his mysterious, all-embracing presence. This belief was also widespread amongst the Jewish Kabbalists with whose mystical doctrines Sachs was well acquainted and in which she found a confirmation of her own mystical ideas.[24] Gershom Scholem, in his book Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, the German version of which Nelly Sachs herself had read, explains the importance of language to the Kabbalists. For them it is

> . . . something more precious than an adequate instrument for contact between human beings. To them Hebrew, the holy tongue, is not simply a means of expressing certain thoughts, born out of a certain convention and having a purely conventional character, in accordance with the theory of language dominant in the Middle Ages. Language in its purest form, that is, Hebrew, according to the Kabbalists, reflects the fundamental spiritual nature of the world; in other words it has a mystical value. Speech reaches God because it comes from God. Man's common language, whose prima facie function, indeed, is only of an intellectual nature, reflects the creative language of God.[25]

Thus, for the Kabbalists, all human language is to be regarded, Scholem continues, as a "key to the deepest secrets of the Creator and His creation."[26]

This mystical view of language as being an earthly manifestation of God's own language and creation, and therefore as possessing the power of divine revelation is reflected in the final stanza of "Völker der Erde." Here a plea is made that words be preserved in their original pure form (they should be left at their "source"), that their meaning should not be distorted, for they have the power of showing that earthly "horizons," that is, the full scope of man's earthly life, are really a part of the divine "heavenly" cosmos of God. Furthermore, because words are fragments of the divine Logos, which in mystical philosophy is the governing creative principle of the universe, they are also actively engaged in acts of new cosmic creation. With their "abgewandten Seite," that is, with their divine aspect as opposed to their limited earthly function as a means of communication between man and man, they "aid the stars to give birth." Thus, within Nelly Sachs' mystical world pattern language is of paramount importance for divine revelation. It allows man to experience his creator and thereby gain insight into the mysteries of his own and of God's existence. Loss of language must inevitably imply loss of contact with the divine sphere.

Many of Sachs' poems, however, have as their theme the neglect and destruction of language in the modern world, thereby showing that the plea uttered in the previously quoted poem has not been heeded. In her earlier poetry the decay of language is seen to be directly attributable to the complete disregard of human and religious values by the murderers of the Third Reich. Implied in the following extract, for example, is the idea that the words "God" and "Man" have become meaningless to those who were responsible for the mass slaughter of the innocent:

> Hände der Todesgärtner
>
> . . . .
>
> Was tatet ihr,
> Als ihr die Hände von kleinen Kindern waret:
> Hieltet ihr eine Mundharmonika, die Mähne
> Eines Schaukelpferdes, faßtet der Mutter Rock im Dunkel,
> Zeigtet auf ein Wort im Kinderlesebuch -
> War es Gott vielleicht, oder Mensch? - (WdT)27

In another early poem the holy land of Israel, that place on earth where, according to many of Sachs' poems, God's presence is most directly experienced,28 is described as having become "nameless" as a result of the horrors that have befallen the world. In the light of Sachs' language mysticism as outlined above this can only mean that in the modern world the full religious import of the concept of Israel has been lost because its name no longer exists:

> Die Schatten des Schrecklichen fielen
>
> . . . .
>
> Schwarzer Wald wuchs erstickend um Israel,
> Gottesmitternachtssängerin.
> Sie verging im Dunkeln,
> Namenlos geworden. (WdT)29

A key word in the imagery of Nelly Sachs is "Abschied." Those who undergo the experience of parting are also seen to live through a mystical departure from this life and enter into the divine world of God.30 Indeed, like all words, it is regarded as a reflection of the word of God and offers insight into the divine cosmos. In the poem "Abschied-" from the collection Sternverdunkelung, however, it is seen to have lost its divine connotations in this world. Because of the mass dissemination of meaningless death which has taken place the experience of parting and the word "Abschied" which conveys this experience have also come to be equally as meaningless. Instead of offering insight into the Divine, "Abschied" is now seen to signify only suffering and fear. It has become a word soaked in the blood of those who have been forced to part from one another--"aus zwei Wunden blutendes Wort"--a symbol of all-consuming pain:

> Heute - zwei hängende Fetzen
> und Menschenhaar in einer Krallenhand
> die riß -.[31]

In later poems Sachs is much more general in her criticism of the present-day state of decay of the human language. She no longer explicitly refers to the loss of the original meaning of certain individual words such as those mentioned above, but directs her attack at human language as a whole which is seen to have been misused and, as a consequence, has ceased to be an instrument for divine revelation. The following excerpt from the poem "Schon" in Flucht und Verwandlung, for example, has as its theme the ineffectualness of language in the modern world:

> Hier aber
> mit gekrönten Haaren
> die Herrscher zwischen Sternenhaufen

im Ei der Nacht
verspielen mit gesetzten Tafeln
weissagende Fernen
in die drehenden Scheiben der Windrose.
Besprechen Wunden mit Salz
bis Luft weinend nach Hause zieht
Musiktüren schließend.[32]

The majority of Nelly Sachs' poems, as will later be explained, turn away from empirical reality because of the virtual impossibility of giving its predominantly negative aspects poetic expression. Instead, they focus their attention on perception on the divine cosmic universe, on the life which exists after death in the "Jenseits." Indeed, in the first two stanzas of this particular poem an apocalyptic vision of a new beginning after death and the new "Heiligensprache" which will accompany it are described. In the stanza quoted above, however, it is stated that the rulers of this world, at present a place where divine light is excluded and where only darkness and night prevail, cannot give or receive divine illumination, are unable to comprehend "weissagende Fernen," because they do not possess an adequate language. They only have at their disposal "gesetzte Tafeln" with which to uncover the secrets of the universe--an image which suggests a rigid, non-flexible code of laws, a language which has become outworn and cliché-ridden. This jaded language is unable to encompass the meaning of the "prophecies" which are received and so these become lost, disseminated, as it were, to the four winds, gambled away "in die drehenden Scheiben der Windrose."

The last three lines of the stanza contain two of Sachs' key images, namely, "Wunde" and "Musik." Within her mystical world view those who experience pain and suffering, those who are inflicted with a "wound," are able actually to transcend earthly suffering and gain insight into the divine, cosmic mystery.[33] Indeed, the experience of pain is regarded as being necessary for such insight, and in a later poem it is even stated that the conscious and deliberate endurance of pain is considered to be a "Berufung," that is to say, the lyrical subject of the poem, to be understood as Sachs herself, sees it as a duty to suffer in order to make contact with and understand the "Jenseits."[34]

The image "Musik" with Nelly Sachs is nearly always connected with the divine sphere or what she terms the "invisible universe." It is its language, which does not consist of words but of pure sounds, barely discernible to the human ear.[35] Here it is stated, however, that the rulers of the world, instead of alleviating the pain of suffering, only make it worse. In this way they exclude the function of suffering as a prerequisite for divine insight and cause it to be experienced as senseless torment. They "charm away" the wounds of life not with a soothing anodyne but with salt, thus making pain needlessly unbearable and thus conceal the "music" of the divine sphere. Although the word "besprechen" is used in the somewhat unusual sense of "to cast a spell upon" or "to exorcise," it still retains its more current meaning of "to speak about." Thus, it is inferred here that the language of those in authority, far from still being rooted in the Divine, is completely divorced from it. Implicit in this poem, therefore, is a criticism of the language of modern society. Those who believe that they control the course of the world, the "Herrscher," have completely lost sight of the deeper significance of the universe and this fact is directly attributed to the loss of their understanding of the divine function of language as a bridge between God and man.

The criticism of the decay of language and the loss of its powers is continued in the Glühende Rätsel cycle of poems. Thematically emphasised here is the fact that human language is unable to give expression to the higher, more noble emotions such as love.[36] Even religious language, which strives to reveal the kingdom of God, has become so clichéd, so out of contact with the Divine, that it does not allow of such revelation.[37]

In the poem "Diese Jahrtausende" the whole body of language is presented as being an anthropomorphic force which loudly laments the fact that it has been misused, and, as a result of its being divorced from the Divine, is unable to reveal the true meaning of suffering in the modern world, evoked in this instance through the image of the sick child:

> Auf der Straße mit Windeseile
> läuft die Frau
> Medizin zu holen für das kranke Kind
>
> Vokale und Konsonanten
> schreien in allen Sprachen:
> Hilfe! (GR IV)[38]

In an extremely cryptic way it is implied here that not medicaments will aid in the alleviation of pain caused by suffering but rather that knowledge of the Divine, mediated through language in its purest form, will make suffering more bearable. Due to the neglect of language, however, this is not seen as being feasible.

In the poem "Dein Name ist dir verlorengegangen" the lyrical subject even goes as far as to offer a gesture of complete rejection towards all earthly language as it is unable to reveal the source of her true identity. Only the language of the (dead) "Geliebter" is able to fulfil this function:

> Dein Name ist dir verlorengegangen
> aber die Welt eilt herzu
> und bietet dir schöne Auswahl an
> Du schütteltst den Kopf
> aber dein Geliebter
> hat dir einmal die Nadel im Heuhaufen gefunden
> Hörst du: er ruft dich schon - (GR II)[39]

The poetry of Nelly Sachs is written, therefore, against a background of "Verstummen" and general bankruptcy of language. The fearful conditions which existed in the Third Reich and which, according to the poetess' own world view, were still perpetuated long after the holocaust itself, defy description. She finds it an almost impossible task to describe the "Jäger" and "Gejagte" syndrome which she considered to be the existential pattern of human life, and so the danger of speechlessness, of poetic defeat, constantly hovers over many of her poems, signalled by faltering, fragmented language.

In addition to this, human language itself is thought to have been destroyed by the events which have taken place in the world: it has become an ineffectual instrument for the expression of truth. The real meanings of words have become distorted or else totally ignored and neglected, and, as a result, they have been transformed into hollow shells, into empty clichés.

For an artist whose medium is the written word Sachs, therefore, was confronted with two major problems: firstly, she had to try to restore to language its original ability to express absolute truth, which, for her, was connected with the Divine, and secondly, she had to conquer the spiritually paralysing effect which events in the human world were capable of causing. On at least two occasions Sachs sums up this position from her own personal viewpoint. In the following lines, for example, she describes the process of having to re-learn how to use language once again:

> Wir Wandernde
> Unsere Wege ziehen wir als Gepäck hinter uns her -
> Mit einem Fetzen des Landes darin wir Rast hielten
> Sind wir bekleidet -
> Aus dem Kochtopf der Sprache die wir unter Tränen erlernten,
> Ernähren wir uns. (WdT)[40]

In addition, she later admitted that "das Schreiben war mein stummer Schrei,"[41] that is, that her post-war literary activity originated from a feeling of overpowering speechlessness and is to be regarded as a way to overcome it. This she does by using her poetry as a vehicle for expressing the existence of a higher "transcendental" reality, rather than limiting its subject matter solely to a depiction of the unbearable aspects of earthly reality.

In the following sections Sachs' treatment of her major theme, the revelation of an all-embracing, metaphysical reality, will be delineated. It will also be shown that this endeavour, too, was not without its pitfalls, that the same danger of poetic "Verstummen" frequently manifests itself in her lyric, both thematically and stylistically, when it confronts itself with the higher reality towards which it strives.

2. Poetry as a Flight into the Transcendental.

i) Mystical Background.

Paul Kersten characterises the central theme of Nelly Sachs' poetry as being: ". . . die von mystischem Todeserleben genährte Sehnsucht nach einer entmaterialisierenden Verwandlung von Geburt und Tod, in das 'unsichtbare Universum.'"[42] The main function of her poetry is to show that earthly reality, with the suffering it causes, can be transcended, that human existence and that of all natural phenomena are essentially part of a divine cosmic reality, and that all which seems paradoxical to human eyes, such as suffering and death, has an ultimate reason within the divine plan.

The mystical cosmology which Sachs developed has many striking parallels with that of Jakob Böhme, with whose works she was intimately acquainted.[43] According to Böhme man lives in a state of exile from God. He leads his earthly existence as if "in einer fremden Herberge,"[44] divorced from the divine "Vaterland"[45] (from whence he originated and to which he will return after death. It is man's fate to suffer on earth as a result of his separation from God. This suffering can, however, be alleviated if man recognises his position and consciously seeks a way back to the "ewige Herberge"[46] of his original "Vaterland." This can be achieved only through the power of the human spirit which still contains deep within it vestiges of the memory of its original harmony with God. Man must explore the realm of the spirit, and in doing so he will be able to free himself from the chains of his earthly existence and discover a new universe of freedom and eternal life in God. Every living creature on earth, so Böhme believed, possesses an inborn "Sehnsucht" for the harmonious "Urstand."[47] This experience of longing must be exploited to the full, as it is a means of achieving insight into the divine sphere.

Böhme reasons that man belongs to two worlds: to the earthly world of torment and pain, and to another world of the spirit which offers access to the divine. By using the power of his imagination he may inwardly transcend the former whilst still outwardly existing in it, and enter into full consciousness of the latter and thus overcome death and envisage his future rebirth. In the words of Böhme:

> Also sind zwo Welten in einander, da keine die andere begreift, und mag nichts in die Licht-Welt eingehen, als nur durchs

> Sterben, und vor dem Sterben muß die Imagination vorhergehen; Der ängstliche Wille muß sich nach der Freyheit der Kraft des Lichtes sehnen und ganz einergeben, und mit der begehrenden Imagination die Kraft der Freyheit fahen; Alsdenn gehet der starcke Wille durch den Tod der Finsterniß, durch das essentialische Feuer durch, und zerbricht die Finsterniß, und fällt in die Licht-Welt, und wohnet im Feuer ohne Qual, in der Freudenreich.[48]

All these conceptions are contained in Sachs' mystical world view. She saw her own enforced exile to Sweden, as well as that of the people of Israel from their holy country of origin, as being symbolic of the higher cosmic exile of mankind as a whole from God.[49] Just as she and the Jewish people were driven from their homelands and forced to live in a state of insecurity and alienation from their origins, so has man been driven out from his divine "Heimat"--a term frequently used by Sachs and which, in nearly all cases, has the same connotations as Böhme's "Vaterland."[50] In order to renew contact with the divine sphere, that which Sachs calls "das unsichtbare Universum,"[51] man must, with the help of his inner imagination and subconscious memory, reconstruct within his own mind the life which will exist after death. If he is able to accomplish this successfully, he will then participate in the eternal whilst outwardly still being subject to the temporal dictates of his mundane existence. Charles Waldemar describes the metaphysical activity of mystics as being a "Sinnen und Trachten nach dem Unendlichen, Uberwirklichen;" they seek "eine höhere Realität . . . das Mystisch-Elementare, die kosmische Macht, die göttliche Seinsqualität."[52] This is also the case with Nelly Sachs.

She seeks to unlock that which Böhme termed "das Mysterium Magnum . . . aus welchem Grunde die sichtbare Welt mit ihrem Wesen und Kreaturen ist entsprossen,"[53] and which she calls throughout her poetry "das Geheimnis."

ii) Poetry as a Revelation of the Higher Reality.

In her notes to the "szenische Darstellung" Der magische Tanzer Nelly Sachs characterises its theme as being an "Ausbruch aus dem Privaten ins Universum."[54] The play demonstrates how the power of "Sehnsucht" allows an individual to break out of his empirical self and, in death, become as one with the cosmos. The majority of Sachs' poems also have as their main theme the transformation of the consciousness of an individual into a higher cosmic consciousness, during which process the empirical, mundane perspective is left behind and insight into a metaphysical universal reality is gained. Seen at their basic level these poems are depictions of encounters by a wide variety of lyrical subjects with this reality. Even in Sachs' first post-war collection In den Wohnungen des Todes, which is to be regarded primarily as a lament for those murdered in German concentration camps, its presence is constantly evoked. In the following excerpt, for example, it is shown that even in the midst of the destruction which has taken place on earth man is able to elevate himself spiritually and become conscious of a life after death:

> Auch auf dem Markte,
> Im Errechnen des Staubes,
> Tat manch einer schnell einen Sprung

> Auf der Sehnsucht Seil,
> Weil er etwas hörte,
> Aus dem Staub heraus tat er den Sprung
> und sättigte sein Ohr.
> Preßt, o preßt an der Zerstörung Tag
> An die Erde das lauschende Ohr,
> Und ihr werdet hören, durch den Schlaf hindurch
> Werdet ihr hören
> Wie im Tode
> Das Leben beginnt.[55]

These lines serve as paradigm for the theme of metaphysical transcendence as outlined above. In continual variations Sachs portrays how it is possible to perceive the other reality and thus gain spiritual release from the earthly one.

Already in In den Wohnungen des Todes it becomes clear that the other universe is connected with the sphere where the souls of the dead and of those as yet unborn exist. A number of the poems depict their lyrical subjects as being able to commune with this sphere and/or as having the capacity to envisage it inwardly. Thus in the poem "Schon vom Arm des himmlischen Trostes umfangen" the "wahnsinnige Mutter," in the midst of her desperation and sadness, is able to evoke the image of her dead child and to experience its presence as if it were a tactile being:

> Mit den Fetzen ihres zerrissenen Verstandes,
> Mit den Zundern ihres verbrannten Verstandes
> Ihr totes Kind einsargend,
> Ihr verlorenes Licht einsargend,
> Ihre Hände zu Krügen biegend,
> Aus der Luft füllend mit dem Leib ihres Kindes,
> Aus der Luft füllend mit seinen Augen, seinen Haaren
> Und seinem flatternden Herzen -
>
> Dann küßt sie das Luftgeborene
> und stirbt![56]

In the same way, orphans are described as being able to perceive their dead parents at night.[57] The "Geliebte" or "Braut," is able to communicate with her dead "Bräutigam,"[58] and the "Liebenden," "Sehnsüchtigen," and "Abschiedskranken" gain direct contact with the "Ungeborenen," with those who can provide hope for a better future on earth.[59]

The "other" universe is also seen to be connected with the divine and with eternity. It is "heaven" in the conventional sense, peopled not only by the ressurrected dead and those who are yet to be born, but also by God, angels and cherubim. In several poems it is shown that the most complete perception of the divine sphere is achieved by those who have already died, such as in the following example, where it is stated that the eyes of the dead "Geliebter," now that they are closed off to the external world, are able to perceive directly the mysteries of God:

> O ihr erloschenen Augen,
> Deren Seherkraft nun hinausgefallen ist
> In die goldenen Überraschungen des Herrn,
> Von denen wir nur die Träume wissen.[60]

Those who have come into contact with death or suffering whilst still on this earth also have the same insight. Among these are included the "Geliebter,"[61] the survivors ("die Geretteten") of the Nazi holocaust, who only narrowly managed to escape death,[62] and also "die Liebenden,"[63] who, in a later poem from Und niemand weiß weiter, are described as always being "nahe am Sterben."[64]

Another important feature of the other universe which is introduced in the collection In den Wohnungen des Todes is that it can manifest itself on earth in all natural phenomena such as the elements and all animate and inanimate things. No matter how inconsequential they may seem they are all essentially "Wahrsager des Himmels."[65] Thus, the lyrical "Ich," for example, states that it mystically perceives the presence of the dead "Geliebter" in the elements: "Wenn ich nur wüßte, was die Elemente meinen; / Sie deuten dich, denn alles deutet immer / auf dich";[66] and in the sun--"Sonne, du trägst sein Blut in deinem Morgen- und Abendgesicht."[67] Stones are seen to contain memories of man's perfect knowledge of God before the Fall,[68] and in them the "orphans" are able to envisage the faces of their dead parents.[69] The "butterfly" is described as being "Der Verwandlung sichtbarstes Zeichen,"[70] that is, its life cycle, which has entailed the metamorphosis from one state into another, is symbolic of the latent capacity of all things to undergo a transformation from an imperfect existence into one of beauty, from the earthly and transient to the divine and eternal.

In this first collection it also becomes clear that Sachs has adopted the Romantic, mystical conception, as did also Günter Eich, that all natural phenomena are the "letters" or "language" of the absolute, divine reality.[71] In the poem "Chor der verlassenen Dinge," for example, the things left behind on earth are described as being ". . . ein Buch, darin die Welten kreisen / Und das Geheimnis flüstert hinter einem

Spalt."72 That is, they constitute a language which reveals the mysteries of the universe. Other instances of this theme are to be found in the cycles "Grabschriften in die Luft geschrieben" and in the "Gebete für den toten Bräutigam." The fish which "die Markthändlerin" sells, for example, are depicted as resembling words which point to the divine--they are "geschrieben für Engel im Sand."73 Also, the lyrical "Ich" is shown as being able to perceive the dead "Geliebter" in the afterlife by means of a mystical language of flames: "Die Kerze, die ich für dich entzündet habe, / Spricht mit der Luft der Flammensprache Beben, / Und Wasser tropft vom Auge; aus dem Grabe / Dein Staub vernehmlich ruft zum ewgen Leben."74

Of prime importance in Sachs' poetry is the idea that true knowledge of the universal reality can only be achieved when this language of nature, which is also equally the language of the dead, for in death they have become an inherent part of the natural cosmos, is fully understood. Indeed, Nelly Sachs' poetry, in its intention to reveal the nature of the divine, all-embracing universe, is essentially an attempt to restore the knowledge on earth of this cosmic alphabet which has become lost to man during the course of time. As Beda Allemann points out: ". . . die wichtigsten Stücke dieser Dichtung (lassen sich) als Versuch auffassen, dem geheimnisvollen und entschwundenen Alphabet eine Artikulation abzugewinnen."75 A later poem from the collection Fahrt ins Staublose contains an important poetological statement to the effect that it is the function of this poetry to gather together all the destroyed syllables of the forgotten cosmic alphabet in order to restore knowledge of the perfect harmony which exists in the cosmos:

> Die abgeschnittene Schöpfung
>
> . . . .
>
> wurde in meine Welt verlegt
> um das Gebet zu finden
> das die verstümmelten Silben zusammenfügt
> in ihre dunkle Harmonie[76]

In In den Wohnungen des Todes it is shown that "die Gejagten" are in possession of this perfect language, and therefore, by implication, ~~have the capacity to be~~ fully initiated into the mysteries of the divine cosmos. The poem "Chor der Bäume" states that those who have been persecuted and who have been forced to live in a state of perpetual fear have, as a result of these experiences, gained command of the cosmic alphabet, the language of nature, which points to "das Geheimnis":

> O ihr Gejagten alle auf der Welt!
> Unsere Sprache ist gemischt aus Quellen und Sternen
> Wie die eure.
> Eure Buchstaben sind aus unserem Fleisch.
>
> . . . .
>
> O ihr Gejagten alle auf der Welt!
> Wir zeigen in ein Geheimnis
> Das mit der Nacht beginnt.[77]

In a later poem from Flucht und Verwandlung it becomes clear that the ideal language, this language of nature, the dead and of the whole divine cosmos is the equivalent in human terms of a utopian language in which a word and the object which it designates are identical:

> Vertriebene
>
> . . . .
>
> Aus verlorenen Sitten geworfen
> dem Gang der Gewässer folgend
> dem weinenden Gelände des Todes
> halten oft noch in der Höhle
> des Mundes
> ein Wort versteckt
> aus Angst vor Dieben
>
> sagen: Rosmarin
> und kauen eine Wurzel
> aus dem Acker gezogen
> oder schmecken nächtelang: Abschied
> sagen:
> Die Zeit ist um
> wenn eine neue Wunde aufbrach
> im Fuß.[78]

Once again it is stated here that those who have been pursued and who have experienced a foretaste of death are in possession of the ideal language. Their words and the things that they name are as one: when the "Vertriebene" say "Rosmarin" and "Abschied," they are able to experience concretely and emotionally that which these words signify. This language is able literally to recreate the essence of external phenomena and is thus indispensable for unlocking the mysteries of the "invisible universe," and would be able to recreate its essence also.

All the thematical aspects of In den Wohnungen des Todes as outlined above are continued and augmented in Sachs' subsequent volumes of poetry. The greater number of the poems depict the possibility of perception of the divine cosmic universe and also the latent capacity of all things to undergo a process of "Verwandlung" from temporal earthly existence into the eternal. The lyrical subjects portrayed as being able to transcend the mundane sphere and thereby gain initiation into the meaning of "das Geheimnis" include those who have experienced the power of love and/or have suffered pain and loss, for example:

> Zeit der Verpuppung
> Zeit der Vergebung
> Verfallene mit dem Gesicht im Staub
> verspüren schon den Schulterschmerz der Flügel
> Wettlauf der Meridiane auf der Sternenhaut
> Aderlaß der Sehnsucht ins Meer der Verklärung
> Herzklopfen der Gestirne
> an die Türen der Liebenden
> und mit dem Rosenkranz ihrer Münder fortbeten
> ihre Leiber in die unsichtbaren Landungen
> der Seligkeiten - (NfT)[79]

Those who are in possession of an inborn "Sehnsucht" or nostalgia which brings with it a compelling desire to return to their cosmic origins, for example:

> Ein schwarzer Jochanaan,
> Nachtfetzen behangen,
> schleift an Gestirnmusik
> den weißen Sehnsuchtsdorn,
> sticht ihn durch der Mondmeere Schlafleib,
> zieht die Rückwege
> des Heimwehs,
> diese schmerzende Nabelschnur
> durch der Adern seufzende Sternstraßen,
>
> immer hinter dem Rücken
> des Schneeläufers Tod. (Nww)[80]

Finally, those who become consciously aware of the lost memory of the divine universe, for example:

Der versteinerte Engel
noch von Erinnerung träufend
von einem früheren Weltall
ohne Zeit
in der Frauenstation wandernd
im Bernsteinlicht
eingeschlossen mit dem Besuch einer Stimme
vorweltlich ohne Apfelbiß
singend im Morgenrot
vor Wahrheit - (NfT)[81]

In each of the poems quoted above there are discernible certain specific thematic patterns which continually occur in Sachs' lyric and which are all connected with the motif of the "Ausbruch aus dem Privaten ins Universum." In the first example the "Verfallene" and "Liebende" are depicted as being almost physically drawn towards the cosmos, symbolised here, as almost everywhere with Sachs, by astral and sea imagery. The "Verfallene" feel the presence of wings on their shoulders and the cosmos appears to race towards them in an effort to pull them up into its sphere. The stars are also portrayed as beckoning to the "Liebende." As a result of this dynamic cosmic activity the longing of the "Verfallene" and the prayers of the "Liebende" reach the "Meer der Verklärung" and the "unsichtbaren Landungen der Seligkeiten," that is, their consciousness has been successfully transported into a sphere of complete cosmic revelation. They have broken out of the "private" sphere and have become an inherent part of the universe.

A similar theme is also contained in the second example, but this time the lyrical subject is not seen to be almost involuntarily pulled towards the universe: rather, he consciously uses the power of "Sehnsucht," generated by his mystical perception of the "music" of the cosmos, to penetrate the universe and thus find a way back to the divine "Heimat," the sphere which exists on the other side of death, "hinter dem Rücken des Schneeläufers Tod". In these examples the actual process of "Verwandlung" is described. The lyrical subject is either drawn towards or draws itself towards the universe. In the third poem, however, the transformation has already taken place. The lyrical subject, "der versteinerte Engel," although seen to be physically part of this world, has nevertheless been spiritually elevated from it. Like an insect trapped in amber it can be seen by those around, and yet there exists an invisible barrier between itself and its everyday surroundings. It is locked, as it were, within the confines of another world. Through the power of instinctive memory of a pre-existent timeless universe it has become part of that universe, and, as a result, is able to commune with it. The voice which is heard from this other world is "vorweltlich ohne Apfelbiß," that is, it emanates from the time before the Fall of man, a time when God and creation stood in perfect harmony with each other. The ultimate truth which "der versteinerte Engel" perceives is knowledge of this original harmony.

These three examples, therefore, serve as basic models for the way in which Nelly Sachs structures her theme of the "Ausbruch aus dem Privaten ins Universum." Her lyrical subjects are generally portrayed as either being attracted to the metaphysical sphere, frequently, almost unconsciously, by some dynamic force, or they strive of their own volition to reach it, or else they are seen to have been fully initiated into its meaning.

Those lyrical subjects who are able to perceive the mysteries of the divine cosmic reality and have the capacity to undergo spiritual metamorphosis as a result of their suffering, love, yearning or instinctive memory of earlier cosmic harmony are frequently specifically named in Sachs' poems. These include a number of Old and New Testament figures such as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Jacob and Christ,[82] certain members of the Chassidic faith,[83] and a wide range of diverse subjects such as "die Mutter," "die Schlafenden," "die Sterbenden," "Auswanderer," "die Tänzerin," "der Flüchtling," "die Ausgestoßenen," etc.[84] Occasionally, also, utopian apocalyptic visions are depicted of the whole of the earthly sphere undergoing the process of "Flucht und Verwandlung."[85] Many of the later poems are what Gisela Dischner calls "Traum- und Visionsprotokollen."[86] They consist of dream-like visions of spiritual metamorphoses or mystical depictions of the nature of the other universe, often without the presence of any discernible lyrical subject.[87]

On a more personal level the lyrical "Ich" of many of these poems also describes its own encounters with the invisible universe: it, too, seems to be participating actively in a "Fahrt ins Staublose." Frequently these more personal poems contain precise descriptions of this other sphere. The following excerpt will serve to illustrate this:

In einer Landschaft aus Musik,
in einer Sprache nur aus Licht,
in einer Glorie,
die das Blut
sich mit der Sehnsucht Zunge angezündet,
dort wo die Häute,
Augen, Horizonte,
wo Hand und Fuß
schon ohne Zeichen sind,
dort wo des Sandelbaumes Duft
schon holzlos schwebt
und Atem baut an jenem Raum weiter,
der nur aus übertretenen Schwellen ist -

. . . .

hier liegt mein Schatten,
eine Hand der Nacht. (Nww)[88]

From this it can be seen that the other sphere into which the subject of the poem has become completely initiated consists of a metaphysical dimension where only the pure ethereal essences of things exist. Everything which would normally have a tangible form--the human body, phenomena of nature, even language--has become transformed into a state of incorporeal transparency. The image of the "language of light" is also to be found in an earlier poem from the collection In den Wohnungen des Todes: it is the language of the dead, articulable only by those who have left the earthly sphere.[89] Implied here, therefore, is that the lyrical "Ich" is now in possession of this cosmic language.

In other poems the atmosphere of vaporous transluscence associated with the "Jenseits," which was evoked in the stanzas quoted above, is re-inforced. The mystical sphere is described as the place where "Ende fließt zum Anfang wie ein Schwanenschrei." It is variously called a "Landschaft, die schon da gewesen / und in der schlummerleichten Vorgeburt der Seele"; an "Übernächtiges Land"; "(die) verdunkelte Leere"; "das Ende der Fernen"; "das Hintergründige"; "das wundenlose Nichts"; "(die) weißen Zinnen des Nichtsseins," etc.[90]

As becomes clear from many other poems, however, such designations as quoted above serve as circumscriptive metaphors for that which is considered to be the absolute essence of the other reality, namely, "silence." As Paul Kersten points out, "Schweigen" is "das Ziel aller Flucht und Verwandlung."[91] The other universe towards which Nelly Sachs' lyrical subjects strive is not only a land of the dead and the divine, it is a sphere of absolute silence, and thus stands in complete contrast to the chaos of worldly existence. The conception of the invisible universe as being a region of pure "Schweigen" is constant from the earlier works right through to the Glühende Rätsel, where it becomes a predominant theme. A number of Sachs' poems depict their lyrical subjects as being able to perceive this silence whilst still existing on earth, as the following examples illustrate:

In meinen Armen liegend
kostest du das Geheimnis
das Elia bereiste -
wo Schweigen redet
Geburt und Sterben geschieht
und die Elemente anders gemischt werden - (StV)[92]

Nachdem du aufbrachst
Loch des Schweigens gähnt
Grab - darin einer Nachtwache Wandlung
schon ohne Ränder
Kuß in die Anfänge

. . . .

Verschlossenes wetterleuchtet
durch die Tür

weißer Zügel
aus ungesprochenem Wortgespann. (Nww)[93]

Frequently they are shown as being able to transcend completely into its sphere:

Wie Nebelwesen
gehen wir durch Träume und Träume
Mauern von siebenfarbigem Licht durchsinken wir -

Aber endlich farblos, wortlos
des Todes Element
im Kristallbecken der Ewigkeit
abgestreift aller Geheimnisse Nachtflügel . . . (StV)[94]

Entgleiste Sterne werden nachtschwarz angestrichen
erlöst sprühen die fünf Sinne wie Leuchtraketen auf -

Und Schweigen ist ein neues Land. (F IV)[95]

The sphere of the "Jenseits" is also seen to possess its own language--a wordless language of silence, severally described as "die taubstumme Schrift aus Abendblut,"[96] or "das geistige Alphabet am Gehör des Schweigens."[97] This silent language of the cosmos also manifests itself on earth in the phenomena of nature. It is "das unbeschriebene Pergament der Schöpfung," the "lippenlose Sprache des Wachstums."98 In one poem, it is even postulated that the "blutig gerissene Kieme des Fisches," a symbol of pain and suffering, forms the first letter of the "wortlosen Sprache."99

In many of Sachs' poems it is shown how it is possible to gain insight into and to commune with the invisible universe by means of language commensurate to its silence, namely with what is called a "Sprache des Atems." This inner language is present only when the words of human speech have disappeared: it is the "language" of pure unconscious thought, experienced most frequently in sleep and dreams. Thus, several times the lyrical subject is described as receiving its most immediate experience with the silence of the "Jenseits" not through the medium of language, but through "Atem." The following examples will serve to illustrate this:

> O die gräberlosen Seufzer (der Toten) in der Luft
> die sich in unseren Atem schleichen - (StV)100
>
> Und Atem baut an jenem Raume weiter
> der nur aus übertretenen Schwellen ist - (Nww)101
>
> Heimliches Land,
> nur aus Begegnungen mit den Toten geschaffen,
> nur aus Atem bewegtes - (Nww)102
>
> Aber vielleicht
> haben wir
> vor Irrtum Rauchende
> doch ein wanderndes Weltall geschaffen
> mit der Sprache des Atems (FlV)103

The unconscious striving for a spiritual metamorphosis into the land of the dead is called an "Äußerste Übung am alten Element des Atems."[104] As Olof Lagercrantz states, the language of "Atem" is analogous to that possessed by Adam before the Fall, a time when the earthly and divine realities were not separated and when these two spheres shared one common language. According to the ideas of Jewish mysticism, human speech in its present form originated from this wordless language.[105] From this it may also be inferred that, according to Sachs, the language of nature, already mentioned as being possessed by the "Gejagten," and the utopian language of the "Vertriebenen" in which the world and the object which it designates are identical, and both constitute this mysterious "Sprache des Atems."

It now remains to be shown that Sachs' poetry not only describes how it is possible to perceive the invisible universe and to depict its ethereal essence, but also to articulate its language, whose "sounds" paradoxically consist of "Atem" and "Schweigen."

iii) The Relationship of the Poetic Word to "Schweigen."

In the later poetry of Nelly Sachs many poems have as their theme the relationship of the poetic word and the phenomenon of "Schweigen." In such "metapoems," which are particularly prevalent in the collection Glühende Rätsel, it becomes clear that she regarded the function of the language of her poetry as being not only a means to describe in an objective manner the transcendence into the invisible universe as outlined in the examples from the previous section, but also to delve more deeply into its essence, that is, into its silence. In one such poem the lyrical "Ich" states that it is confronted with "Einen Punkt im Universum / . . . . / darin Menschenrede / den Tag verschläft,"[106] that is, with a sphere which cannot be described through normal human speech. Nevertheless it seeks to give articulation to this sphere by means of the poetic word:

> Jeden Tag
> einen Schritt näher tun
> in das dunkle Wunder
> der Unsichtbarkeit
> Am Abend in die Nacht gelangen
> am Morgen in den Tag
> Die Stille ertasten mit dem Wort.[107]

In this way the poem is regarded as a "singende Pyramide" of words, whose task it is "auszumessen das entzündete Schweigereich," the land of the dead.[108] In other poems it is shown that language does indeed have the power to facilitate perception and communication with the "Jenseits" and its "Schweigen." The following excerpts will serve to illustrate this:

> Lichterhelle kehrt ein in den dunklen Vers
> weht mit der Fahne Verstehen (GR I)[109]

> Diese Telegraphie mißt mit der Mathematik à la satane
> die empfindlich musizierenden Stellen
> an meinem Leib aus
> Ein Engel aus den Wünschen der Liebe erbaut
> stirbt und aufersteht in den Buchstaben
> in denen ich reise - (GR I)[110]

> Ich schreibe dich -
> Zur Welt bist du wieder gekommen
> mit geisternder Buchstabenkraft
> die hat getastet nach deinem Wesen
> Licht scheint
> und deine Fingerspitzen glühen in der Nacht
> Sternbild bei der Geburt
> aus Dunkelheit wie diese Zeilen - (GR III)[111]

In each of these examples the written word is seen to be an indispensible vehicle for obtaining insight into the "Schweigereich." It is maintained that through the darkness of language light appears, and that manifestations from the other universe become almost physically present through the letters.

Despite these apparent demonstrations of faith in the poetic word to articulate the sphere of silence there nevertheless remains the paradox that the ideal language which the lyrical "Ich" of these poems ultimately seeks is, in fact, a language of silence or the "Sprache des Atems" as earlier explained. In many of the later poems this search for a wordless language becomes thematic. The "Ich" states that its goal is the "Heimatsprache . . . am Anfang der Worte."[112] In order to attain this utopian aim a new language is required:

> Wo nur finden die Worte
> die Erhellten vom Erstlingsmeer
> die Augen-Aufschlagenden
> die nicht mit Zungen verwundeten
> die von den Lichter-Weisen versteckten
> für deine entzündete Himmelfahrt
> die Worte
> die ein zum Schweigen gesteuertes Weltall
> mitzieht in deine Frühlinge - (GR II)[113]

Here it is categorically stated that words are necessary for a spiritual "Verwandlung" into the "Jenseits," the cosmos of silence. Yet these words are not those of ordinary language, but rather, that which is required is the language which originated at the dawn of creation ("vom Erstlingsmeer"), a language of silence ("nicht mit Zungen verwundeten"), at present concealed from the earthly sphere.

This desire for a silent language commensurate to the "Schweigen" of the "Jenseits" leads to the recognition that complete spiritual union with the absolute sphere cannot take place totally through the medium of the written word but only through "silence" itself. The poetic word can indeed facilitate perception of the "Jenseits," can "redeem" it "von der Unsichtbarkeit,"[114] but it is only through silence, which may be equated with the inner language of the mind, that it can be envisaged most completely.

The preference for the gaining of insight into, or of experiencing a unio mystica with the invisible universe not by means of language but through the medium of silence is echoed in several poems of the Glühende Rätsel cycle. Here it is stated that when the "Geheimnis an der Grenze des Todes" is perceived, it should not be given articulation through language, but should be kept silent--"Lege den Finger an den Mund: / Schweigen Schweigen Schweigen."[115] The "Ich" can only reach the "Du" in the land of the dead through silence--"und dann mein Du / das man gefangen hielt / und das zu retten ich erkoren war / und das in Rätseln weiter ich verlor / bis hartes Schweigen sich auf Schweigen senkte . . ."[116] Finally, it is only the word "vom Schweigen zu Tode getroffen" that can be "hineingeflüstert" "im Schauder der neuen Sprache,"[117] that is, that it becomes part of the utopian cosmic language of silence.

From this it can be seen, therefore, that there exists in Sachs' poetry a somewhat paradoxical tension between the poetic word and silence: if the "Schweigen" of the "Jenseits" is to be made manifest, then language itself must be made to dissipate into silence. This tension forms the theme of another "metapoem" from the collection _Flucht und Verwandlung_:

> Eine Garbe Blitze
> fremde Macht
> besetzen
> diesen Acker aus Papier
> Worte lodern
> tödliches Begreifen
> Donner schlägt das Haus ein
> darin Grablegung geschah.
>
> Nach Vergebung dieses Lebens
> aus verzehrter Schreibweise
> aus der einzigsten Sekunde
> hebt der innere Ozean
> seine weiße Schweigekrone
> in die Seligkeit zu dir -[118]

In the first stanza the written word is depicted as being possessed by a kind of spiritual energy. It is through this that insight is gained into the region of the dead, "das Haus . . . darin Grablegung geschah." This is in accordance with Sachs' belief, outlined earlier, that the words of human language are in essence a reflection of the word of God and the divine "Jenseits." In the second stanza, however, it becomes clear that the act of writing is but the first stage in the process of gaining cosmic insight. True perception only occurs in the silence present after the words have been articulated. Words are necessary for insight, but they are merely the starting-off point, as it were; they serve to highlight the silence which surrounds them.

The tension between language and silence is not only dealt with as a theme in certain of Nelly Sachs' poems: frequently it is also incorporated into her poetic style. In their efforts to plumb the depths, so to speak, of the "Schweigereich," to convey its essence, many of her poems do actually dissipate into silence. Meant by this is not the negative speechlessness or "Verstummen," mentioned earlier, which is stylistically characterised by faltering language, but a silence pregnant with meaning, which complements that which has been said by the written word. Thus many of the poems contain pauses which occur between the words or at the end of the poems themselves, and which, as Beda Allemann observes, make perceptible the presence of silence.[119] Gisela Dischner also shows that the stylistic incorporation of silence in certain of Sachs' poems is effected through the use of such devices as ellipsis and aposiopesis, and that frequently the dissipation into silence is signalled by a dash.[120] These pauses, which occur as a result of such stylistic features, however, are often not indicative of negative "Verstummen," as Dischner maintains.[121] Rather, they denote the presence of positive silence, that is, the other universe. The following excerpts illustrate the integration of words and silence within the individual poem:

> Wenn der Tag leer wird
> in der Dämmerung,
> wenn die bilderlose Zeit beginnt,
> die einsamen Stimmen sich verbinden -
> die Tiere nichts als Jagende sind
> oder gejagt -
> die Blumen nur noch Duft -
> wenn alles namenlos wird wie am Anfang -
> gehst du unter die Katakomben der Zeit,
> die sich auftun denen, die nahe am Ende sind -
> dort wo die Herzkeime wachsen -
> in die dunkle Innerlichkeit hinab
> sinkst du -
> schon am Tode vorbei
> der nur ein windiger Durchgang ist - (StV)[122]

> Alles weißt du unendlich nun,
> o meine Mutter -
> denn Rahels Grab ist längst Musik geworden -
> und Stein und Sand
> ein Atemzug im Meer,
> und Wiegenlied von aller Sterne:
>
> Und Ränder überall aus Meer -
> du weißt - (Nww)[123]

In the first example cited here the lyrical subject is described as being actively engaged in transcending the earthly sphere and entering into the "invisible universe" or "Schweigereich." The experiences encountered on this metaphysical journey are related. Everything becomes "bilderlos," or "namenlos . ... wie am Anfang." Only the essences or fundamental patterns of things are perceived--"die Blumen nur noch Duft," "Tiere nichts als Jagende sind / oder gejagt -." The atmosphere of ethereal vacuity evoked by these images is enhanced by the pauses created by the dashes which punctuate almost every second line. These pauses have as much validity as the words themselves in that they emphasise the "Bild-" and "Namenlosigkeit" which the words are attempting to convey.

In the second example a similar technique is employed. Here the "mother" is depicted as having already completed the transcendence into the "Schweigereich" and as being fully initiated into its mysteries: "Alles weißt du unendlich nun, / o meine Mutter -". Once again, this sphere is described in ethereal terms. That which on earth had tangible substance has become transformed into a state of transparent immateriality ("Musik," "Atemzug," "Wiegenlied"), has returned to its source, symbolised here by the archetypal image of the sea. As in the previous example the pauses accentuate the presence of "Schweigen," but here it is made even more tangible by the fact that at the conclusion the language of the poem becomes gradually reduced to the point where it seems to dissolve into nothingness. The words actually seem to give way to silence, so that it finally predominates. In this way the poem gives the impression of leading out into the "Schweigereich." Its words are the starting-off point, but silence is its goal.

The interplay of language and silence finds its most poignant expression in Sachs' late poems, particularly in those from the collection Glühende Rätsel, which mainly consists of depictions of encounters by a lyrical "Ich" with the invisible universe and its silence.[124] In many of the poems the lyrical subject intimates that it is now as one with the other sphere[125] and is in possession of its silent language.[126] As Paul Kersten points out: "Die Rätsel stellen den Anspruch, die 'schweigende Sprache' zum Reden zu bringen. 'Du bist jenseits' - aus dem Ort der unio mystica sollen die Worte vernehmbar werden."[127] Hellmut Geißner also notes that the greatly reduced language and style of these poems, "die Verkürzung bis zur Gnomik," is the result of their efforts to articulate the silence of the "Jenseits."[128] It is, however, misleading to regard, as Geißner does, the actual language of the Glühende Rätsel as being literally "sprechendes Schweigen."[129] Rather, it would be more helpful to understand the linguistic reduction present in these poems as being a conscious attempt to make the presence of silence more tangible. The reduction of language causes the absence of silence, so to speak, to become minimised. In one poem the dissipation of human speech into its barest components when a confrontation with the "Jenseits" occurs even becomes thematic:

> Immer noch um die Stirn geschlungen
> den strengen Horizont der Krankheit
> mit dem rasenden Aufstand des Kampfes -
> die Rettungsleine in den Abgrund geworfen
> das Nacht-Ertrinkende zu fassen -
>
> O-A-O-A-
> ein wiegendes Meer der Vokale
> Worte sind alle abgestürzt. (GR II)[130]

What this poem is essentially demonstrating is that when an "Ausbruch aus dem Privaten ins Universum" takes place, that is, when a "lifeline" is cast into the cosmic abyss of silence, human speech falls away, can even reach the point where it almost totally disintegrates. However, it is through these remnants of speech, which themselves border on silence, that the "Schweigen" of the "Jenseits" becomes most discernible.

The majority of the poems of the collection Glühende Rätsel do not go as far as this extreme case but nevertheless it may be said that they hover on the brink, as it were, of the silence which they strive to evoke. However, the dangers inherent in leading language beyond the boundaries of its normal capabilities, to transform it into a vehicle for the articulation of its exact opposite, namely, silence, also become apparent in the above quoted poem. The poem runs the risk of disintegrating into total incoherence, of becoming an unintelligible fragment, and thereby, of ultimately failing in its intent to make tangible the presence of "Schweigen." Instead of vivying the presence of silence it can easily lapse into a state of negative "Verstummen," because it is unable to convey any palpable meaning.

3. The Threat of negative "Verstummen" before the metaphysical Reality.

In the previous section the main themes of the lyric of Nelly Sachs were outlined. It was stated that the majority of her poems depict in continual variation the process of a mystical "Ausbruch aus dem Privaten ins Universum," a "Verwandlung" from the temporal into the eternal, from the "Diesseits" to the "Jenseits." The sphere of the "Jenseits" is described in Sachs' poems in religious, mystical terms: it is "heaven," the place where the souls of the dead exist and where eternal life begins. It is also conceived of as a metaphysical dimension of nothingness and silence. Because of this, it is postulated that communion with or spiritual "Verwandlung" into this dimension can only be achieved when the silent language of nature, the lost alphabet of the dead, is understood, and when mastery has been gained of the inner "Sprache des Atems," a purified language, uncontaminated by human speech and thereby commensurate to the silent language of the "invisible universe." Furthermore it was shown that Sachs sees the function of her poetry not only to describe the capacity of all things to undergo an inner spiritual "Verwandlung" and thus obtain insight into the "Jenseits," but also to act as a vehicle with which to "measure out" the "Schweigereich." Paradoxically enough, however, although the poetic word is regarded as being necessary for facilitating insight into the "invisible universe," complete spiritual "Verwandlung" can only take place in silence. Therefore, in order that the poem be equal to its task of giving articulation to the metaphysical dimension and allowing intimations of its essence to become present in the poetic word, silence must also be incorporated into language. For this reason many of Sachs' poems are punctuated with pregnant pauses or else completely dissipate into silence. These poems are structured in such a way as to contain a balanced interplay between words and silence with the aim of making the presence of silence more tangible. The words aid, so to speak, in giving silence form. Finally, the dangers of such an undertaking were pointed out. The language or the poem can be reduced to such a degree that it becomes meaningless--instead of leading the way into "Schweigen," it can degenerate, at least as far as the reader is concerned, into incoherent speechlessness or "Verstummen."

Nelly Sachs' poetry does not only describe, however, successful moments of insight and positive, confident appraisal of the poetic word as a medium for creating this insight. As Bengt Holmqvist observes, when discussing Sachs' attitude towards her own basic metaphysical and poetological ideas: "Vollkommen überzeugt wird sie nie; die Motoren ihrer Dichtung heißen öfter Angst und Zweifel als Vertrauen und Gewißheit."[131] Thus, there is discernible in much of Sachs' lyric a pessimistic attitude, a feeling of hopelessness which is generated by the underlying knowledge that the "invisible universe" and its silence cannot be perceived during earthly existence nor can they be given expression through the medium of poetry. Such pessimism can only result in an undermining of the validity of her poetic production and lead to the recognition that it has failed in its purpose. In the final instance it can lead to the occurrence of poetic speechlessness.

This negative side to Sachs' lyric is best illustrated by means of examples. Certain of her poems document an attitude of uncertainty as to the nature of the "invisible universe." They show that neither its essence nor the direction in which it lies are known. This attitude of bewilderment and disorientation often results in an urgent questioning as to what the life after death will be like, for example:

> Wer weiss, welche magischen Handlungen
> sich in den unsichtbaren Räumen vollziehen.
>
> . . . .
>
> O die unsichtbaren Städte
> darin die Schlafenden ihre Ausflüge machen
>
> Wälder der Traumgesichter -
> was werdet ihr sein in Wahrheit nach unserem Tod? (StV)[132]

> Wie aber wird Liebe sein
> am Ende der Nächte,
> bei den durchsichtig gewordenen Gestirnen?
> Denn Erz kann nicht mehr Erz sein,
> wo Selige sind - (Nww)[133]

Occasionally, also, the lyrical "Ich" openly admits that it is totally without knowledge of the region where the dead now exist:

> Ich kenne nicht den Raum
> wo die ausgewanderte Liebe
> ihren Sieg niederlegt
> und das Wachstum in die Wirklichkeit
> der Visionen beginnt
> noch wo das Lächeln des Kindes bewahrt ist
> das wie zum Spiel in die spielenden Flammen geworfen wurde
> (NfT)[134]

In addition to those poems which have as their theme the lack of orientation in the face of the "invisible universe" are others which document either the lack of perception of the "Schweigereich," failure to undergo spiritual "Verwandlung," or the inability to communicate with the dead, the inhabitants of the mystical realm, for example:

Hier -
wo ich scheiterte im Salz.

. . . .

erscheinst du
rückwärts
in der verdunkelten Leere,
die wartend um dich steht,
ein Korb gefüllt zu werden

. . . .

meinen Atem reiche ich dir
und falle ab,
wieder auf einer Distel zu wohnen,
die niemals Blume wird - (Nww)[135]

Aber wenn auch Heimweh auszog
und der Leib auf dem Laken liegt
- zusammengerollte Fahne der die Freiheit entstieg -
so ist noch nicht der Grad der Finsternis
erreicht wo die Dimension der Auferstehungen beginnt
und die Musik der Sterne abgebrochen wird
von einem Schweigen
das sich im Leben einmal Tod genannt. (NfT)[136]

Dein Auge so leer
sucht verlorenen Himmel
Nächstes: Venus und Mars sind abgesucht
Das Sonnensystem war nur ein Wanderheim
Wohin? wenn die Pupille erstarrt
Sandsein ist zu nah noch - (TdN)[137]

In each of these examples it is shown that it is impossible to discard completely the earthly empirical perspective and transcend spiritually into the metaphysical dimension. Unlike the poems quoted in the previous section which illustrated the theme of successful "Verwandlung" into the "Jenseits," these poems depict the opposite. They show that the gravitational pull of the earth, as it were, is too strong a force to allow escape--"Sandsein ist zu nah noch."

Connected with the theme of the frustrated perception of the "Jenseits," certain of Sachs' poems demonstrate a profound scepticism as to the power of language to facilitate successful insight. In the following excerpt, for example, the lyrical "Ich" shows complete mistrust in the value of the poetic word as a means of giving articulation to the "Schweigereich:"

> Uneinnehmbar
> ist eure nur aus Segen errichtete
> Festung
> ihr Toten.
>
> Nicht mit meinem Munde
> der
> Erde
> Sonne
> Frühling
> Schweigen
> auf der Zunge wachsen läßt
> weiß ich das Licht
> eures entschwundenen Alphabetes
> zu entzünden. (FlV)[138]

Here it is stated with some finality that the region of the dead is completely unassailable, that it cannot be envisaged in the human mind. The second stanza contains what amounts to a complete refutation of one of the main aims of Sachs' poetry, namely to establish the fact that all things are essentially an inherent part of the divine cosmic order of eternity by showing that they have the latent capacity of undergoing a process of metamorphosis from the mundane sphere into the eternal. Here it is admitted that the poetic act of describing the universal potential for growth and metamorphosis into the "Schweigereich"--the words "earth," "sun," "spring," and "silence" are among some of Sachs' key images and suggest, in the order in which they appear here, the idea of growth and transformation into silence--is not capable of contributing to an understanding of the cosmic language of the dead. These misgivings as to the power of language stand in complete contrast to Sachs' mystical concept of the word as previously outlined.

In conjunction with the themes delineated above is the suggestion in certain of Sachs' poems that such disorientation and failure of the perceptive faculties as well as the inadequacy of the poetic word in the face of the "invisible universe" can lead to speechlessness or "Verstummen." This is occasionally expressed as a theme, as in the following examples:

> Deine Sehnsucht baut an der Schwester -
> aus den Elementen, die sie verborgen halten,
> holst du sie herein
> bis sie aufatmet in deinem Bett -
> der Bruder aber ist um die Ecke gegangen
> und der Gatte zu hoch noch eingekehrt
> da läßt die Demut dich verstummen - (StV)[139]

> Alles ist ausgewandert mit dir
> mein ganzer Besitz enteignet -
>
> nur trinkst du Geliebtestes mir
> die Worte vom Atem
> bis ich verstumme - (FS)[140]

> Wieder hat einer in der Marter
> den weißen Eingang gefunden

> Schweigen - Schweigen - Schweigen -
>
> Die innere Sprache erlöst
> welch ein Sieg -
>
> Wir pflanzen hier Demut - (NfT)[141]

In the first example the lyrical subject is undertaking an inner "Wanderung zu den Toten" and is able to conjure up visions of people once known. However, as a result of not being able to envisage them completely she is forced into a state of speechlessness, and, as the ensuing stanzas of the poem show, the vision becomes broken off. In the poem from which the second example is excerpted the lyrical subject describes the feeling of impotent helplessness experienced as a consequence of the loss of those nearest. Not only have the dead caused a benumbing of the senses, they have also taken away her language, forced her into a state of speechlessness, and because of this she can comprehend neither the world around her nor the realm where the dead now exist. The third example, entitled "Grabschrift," is a continuation of the theme of "Verstummen aus Demut" already encountered in the first poem quoted here. The poem describes how, after death, someone has found "den weißen Eingang" into the "Schweigereich" and how consequently his inner language, his "Sprache des Atems," has become as one with the language of silence of the other sphere. The final line of the poem attests to the fact that here on earth it is impossible to be fully initiated into this silent language and that it is of no use to attempt to give it articulation. The only result of this knowledge can be "Verstummen," a gesture of resignation. Indeed, in a number of Sachs' later poems there is to be detected a mood of weariness connected with the search for the dead and their cosmic language of silence.[142]

The threat of speechlessness or negative "Verstummen" before the "invisible universe" is not only presented as a theme in many of Sachs' poems. Frequently those poems which depict the failure to perceive the metaphysical sphere seem themselves to disintegrate stylistically into speechlessness. The following will serve as an example:

> Hölle ist nackt aus Schmerz -
> Suchen
> sprachlos
> suchen
> Überfahrt in die Rabennacht
> mit allen Sintfluten
> und Eiszeitaltern umgürtet
> Luft anmalen
> mit dem was wächst hinter der Haut
> Steuermann geköpft mit dem Abschiedsmesser
> Muschellaut ertrinkt
> Su Su Su (GR II)[143]

The poem depicts in highly abstract terms a search into the unknown for the other universe. Because of the uncertainty as to the direction in which it lies and the dangers that have to be encountered the sensibilities become numbed and language falls away. In the last three lines it is implied that all orientation in this dark and incomprehensible region is lost. There is no guide to lead further ("Steuermann geköpft mit dem Abschiedsmesser"), and all perception of the intangible goal disappears, "Muschellaut ertrinkt."[144] This lack of perception is graphically conveyed in the last line by a series of meaningless sounds, and thus the poem itself lapses into speechlessness.

There are many other poems, especially in Sachs' later works, which demonstrate this tendency to break off in a gesture of "Verstummen." It will be noticed, by way of illustration, that most of the poems quoted above to illustrate the themes of the lack of orientation and perception of the metaphysical sphere also have the flow of their syntax disturbed with punctuation pauses and tend to terminate abruptly on a note of indecision. After the recognition has been reached that it is impossible to proceed further they come, so to speak, to a standstill. Such poems do not lead out into the positive "Schweigen," as was the case with the examples analysed in the previous section, but instead, culminate in an attitude of poetic defeat. In this way they take on the character of isolated, hesitant fragments which fail in their purpose of illuminating the "invisible universe." Concerning these fragmented poems Wilhelm Höck writes: "Die geschauten, erfahrenen Bilder gelangen an kein harmonisches Ziel, und selbst die Gedichtzyklen bleiben offen, ergänzungsbedürftig. Die Gedichte erweisen sich als Bruchstücke des Erleidens und Bruchstücke der Hoffnung auf eine 'Fahrt ins Staublose,' in die Ordnung nämlich, wo nichts mehr wieder zu Staub wird."[145]

The poems of Nelly Sachs, therefore, alternate between a feeling of confidence as to the ability of the poetic word to reveal the nature of the invisible universe, to give its silence form, and an attitude of despair at the realisation of the impossibility of their being able to achieve their intended goal. On the one hand they reach out into the "Schweigereich" and proclaim successful perception of it, whereas on the other they decline into a state of negative speechlessness and thus attest to their own failure. Occasionally, as was shown, the dividing line between "Schweigen" and "Verstummen" in certain of the poems becomes blurred. In attempting to point the way and even give articulation to positive silence there exists the danger that the poem itself can disintegrate into incoherent speechlessness.

There is one important aspect to Nelly Sachs' lyrical world, however, which must not be overlooked. Although it has been shown that many of her poems do have the tendency to fall into the state of "Verstummen" when striving to give articulation to the "Schweigereich," despair and poetic failure do not form an end-stage in her lyric. This was, it will be recalled, also the case with the poetry of Kaschnitz. Rather, with Sachs, these more negative attitudes are regarded as intermediate stages which have to be endured in the hope that out of failure success will be generated. Indeed, certain of Sachs' poems speak of poetic failure and despair as being a necessary impetus for renewed attempts at achieving their goal. The following excerpt will serve to illustrate this idea:

> Verzweiflung
> deine Buchstaben wie Streichhölzer
> Feuerspeiend
> Niemand kommt ans Ende
> als durch dein Wortgeweih (GR IV)[146]

Otto Knörrich also observes the alternation of success and failure in Sachs' poetry. He states: ". . . das dichterische Wort steht . . . in der Dialektik von 'Untergang' und Auferstehung . . . . Gerade im Durchhalten des stets neu erlittenen eigenen Scheiterns verwirklicht sich die Lyrik von Nelly Sachs."[147]

Thus Sachs' poetry continually strives towards a goal in the full awareness that it can never be satisfactorily reached. It is only in death itself that an encounter with the dead can take place, that the enigma of "das Geheimnis" can be solved. The poem itself is only an initial stage--

> So tief bin ich hinabgefahren
> über meine Geburt hinaus
> bis ich den früheren Tod traf
> der mich wieder verstieß
> in diese singende Pyramide
> um auszumessen das entzündete
> Schweigereich
> und ich sehne mich weiß nach dir
> Tod - sei mir kein Stiefvater mehr - (GR II)[148]

In this chapter it has been shown, therefore, that the poetry of Nelly Sachs has two main subject areas: the historical, empirical world, envisaged as a place of degenerate cruelty, and a higher metaphysical sphere, a region which offers escape and spiritual salvation. When Sachs' poems, however, try to give linguistic expression to the realities of the historical world they tend to fall into a state of speechlessness. Also, when they endeavour to articulate the utopian world of the spirit, which is regarded as a refuge from and a foil to mundane existence, the same danger of speechlessness arises. Seen in this way Sachs' poetry is caught up in a dilemma: surrounded, as it were, on both sides with the threat of failure it struggles constantly to extricate itself from the empirical perspective and explore the absolute realm of nothingness and silence, but this too, in the final instance, is not destined for complete success. The only way that "Schweigen" can adequately be given form is through silence itself, a fact which would ultimately render superfluous the act of writing poetry.

CHAPTER V

PAUL CELAN

Mit den Sackgassen sprechen
vom Gegenüber,
von seiner
expatriierten
Bedeutung -:

dieses
Brot kauen, mit
Schreibzähnen.
(from Schneepart)

When observed in its entirety the poetry of Kaschnitz, Eich and Sachs as discussed in the preceding chapters follows a course which gradually leads from specific, easily recognisable spheres of reality into areas of experience which the human mind has great difficulties in comprehending. Kaschnitz' lyric is firmly rooted in the concrete, historical world. With Eich this is only partly true. Whilst his poetry focuses much of its attention on the empirical world, it also opens up new, more absolute dimensions of existence, a venture which, however, was not ultimately destined for success. Sachs' poetry, on the other hand, tends to leave more and more the actual phenomenal world behind and press forward into numinous metaphysical spheres which, because of their essential ineffableness, are equated with silence. A striking feature of the language used to lead the imagination into the unknown is its increasingly esoteric nature: the further it progresses, the "darker," the more difficult to understand does it become.

The poetry of Paul Celan, comprising eight volumes published during the years 1952-1971,[1] would seem to mark the final stage in this development. It leads out with an even greater intensity of purpose into non-definable regions of experience using an autistic language which reflects their inaccessibility to normal modes of expression and understanding.

As was the case with Nelly Sachs the new areas of reality which Celan's poems are intended to reveal are frequently equated with "Schweigen." Unlike in her poetic view, however, they are not just connected with a divine cosmology but are much vaguer in nature. That which Celan hopes to uncover in the mental "Innenraum" which his poetry probes is referred to as "etwas ganz Anderes," or an "ansprechbares Du." Meant by this are aspects of the existence of a reality quite different from the mundane historical one, and, in an age where each individual is felt to be completely isolated from the other, a figure with whom intimate spiritual contact can be made, a "Gegenüber."

Celan's poetry, however, continually falls prey to the dangers of speechlessness and defeat. It strives to develop a language commensurate to the intangible nature of the reality with which it confronts itself and yet time and again it documents its lack of success in this respect. Celan has been called a "poet's poet."[2] His lyric not only deals with its main theme, the quest for "das ganz Andere" and the "Du," but also, by means of certain "metapoems," comments upon its own aims, the methods it uses to accomplish them and the progress it makes. Thus, poetic failure, when it does occur, becomes manifested not only in practice but also theoretically.

Because of the often extremely hermetic nature of Celan's language and the many hidden literary, philosophical, historical and Jewish allusions it contains, his poetry presents great obstacles to the critic. As far as the secondary literature is concerned, this often results in too great a concentration on isolated aspects of Celan's thought with not enough attention being paid to its broader outlines. Peter Mayer, for example, insists that the main theme of Celan's poetry is its author's relationship to his Jewish heritage: "Sie ist nach etwas entstanden, nach Verfolgung, Tod und Vernichtung der Juden. Aber ihr Inhalt ist nicht nur Betroffensein oder Klage. Sondern fortdauernde Auseinandersetzung mit den geistigen Gehalten des Judentums in Beziehung zur eigenen Person."[3] Without any explanation whatsoever one anonymous reviewer of the volume Lichtzwang refers to "der chassidische Dichter Paul Celan,"[4] and Jerry Glenn in his monograph on Celan claims to detect all manner of references to Jewish traditions, giving rise to the impression that his work can only be understood in this light.[5] On the other hand, Marlies Janz takes great pains to unearth what for her constitutes irrevocable evidence that Celan was a consciously political poet who dreamed of the fulfillment of a social utopia.[6]

Whilst it is a fascinating exercise to adopt the role of detective when seeking a key for an understanding of Celan's poetry, there is the real danger of becoming too entangled in factual detail with the result that the forest becomes obscured by the trees. In truth, Celan's lyric contains a multitude of thematic aspects and lends itself to interpretation on many levels. Perhaps the most effective way to understand Celan, however, is to follow the advice he himself gave to Robert de Beaugrande, who writes: "Celan's own opinion was that the poems were to be read concretely, associating freely without regard for the meaning isolated elements may have had for the poet."[7]

This suggestion has been heeded in the chapter to follow. That does not mean to say that Celan's work is regarded as being merely a kind of "écriture automatique" which relies solely for its effect on intuitive as opposed to rational comprehension, but rather that no attempt is made to decipher every image and every thought. This approach clears the way for an understanding of the broadest implications of Celan's poetry and does not detract from what he himself declared in two speeches to be its chief aims.

As was the case in the three previous chapters of this study, the phenomenon of speechlessness will not be analysed in isolation but in the context of the works themselves where it occurs and in the light of the theoretical principles which underlie them. The first section offers a detailed analysis of the poetological intent of Celan's lyric as it is described in his "Ansprache anläßlich der Entgegennahme des Literaturpreises der Freien Hansastadt Bremen" (1958), and in "Der

Meridian. Rede anläßlich der Verleihung des Georg-Büchner-Preises" (1960). In both these speeches Celan talks at some length on the causes of "Verstummen" in modern poetry and these, too, will be explained as they have a direct bearing on his own work. Ensuing sections then examine the various stages of Celan's poetic development and illustrate the incidences of defeat and speechlessness in all their manifestations, whilst at the same time suggesting reasons for their occurrence.

The Celan chapter is somewhat longer than the preceding ones. This can be justified for a number of reasons. Firstly, Celan's poetological ideas and their practical application are highly complex and have many ramifications. Even though there is the risk of occasionally repeating what other interpreters of his work have already discerned, it was felt necessary to analyse his poetics thoroughly in order to present as clear an impression as possible and to "de-mystify" their rather esoteric substance.

Secondly, it is only through a rigorous account of all of Celan's works that the consistency of his thought can be most convincingly brought to light.

Lastly, although it was Nelly Sachs who received the Nobel Prize for literature, admittedly one suspects, as a result of the misguided view that she was the chief mouthpiece for the suffering of the Jewish people during the latter day diaspora, it is Paul Celan who is regarded as the most important and innovative representative of post-war German speaking poets. His work, therefore, deserves a maximum of attention. As will be made clear, his lyric is of significance because of what it intended to accomplish, namely, to epitomise the major trends inherent in modern poetry as a whole. This fact in itself demands careful explanation.

1. The Theoretical Principles of Celan's Poetry and the Reasons for the Occurrence of Lyrical Speechlessness: the "Bremer Preisrede" and "Der Meridian."

In the poem "Tübingen Jänner" from the collection Die Niemandsrose (1963) Celan expresses the idea that any attempt to articulate directly what can only be regarded as the overwhelmingly negative state of the modern world is instantly doomed to failure and that speechlessness can be the only result:

Käme,
käme ein Mensch,
käme ein Mensch zur Welt, heute, mit
dem Lichtbart der
Patriarchen: er dürfte,
spräch er von dieser
Zeit, er
dürfte
nur lallen und lallen,
immer- immer-
zuzu.[8]

As he makes clear in the speech which he gave on accepting the literary prize of the city of Bremen in 1958, this experience of the impotence of language *vis-à-vis* the inhumanity of the reality of the historical world was one which Celan himself was forced to endure at the start of his literary career. Indeed, he implies that the original impetus for the particular development of his own poetry was the desire to overcome the condition of speechlessness which he felt had been imposed upon him. The language of his poetry was born, so to speak, from the state of speechlessness: it was its starting point. Concerning this aspect of his artistic evolvement Celan writes:

> Sie, die Sprache, blieb unverloren, ja trotz allem. Aber sie mußte nun hindurchgehen durch ihre eigenen Antwortlosigkeiten, hindurchgehen durch furchtbares Verstummen, hindurchgehen durch die tausend Finsternisse todbringender Rede. Sie ging hindurch und gab keine Worte her für das, was geschah; aber sie ging durch dieses Geschehen. Ging hindurch und durfte wieder zutage treten, "angereichert" von all dem.[9]

As can be detected from this quotation, Celan does not regard his poetic language as being something static but, to the contrary, as something which is constantly on the move, as it were, and which possesses its own inner dynamism.[10] Having been exposed to the dangers of speechlessness it seems to want to move out into a direction where this threat will no longer exist.

Celan continues with this somewhat abstract idea in the Bremen speech when he describes the further development of his poetry after its initial difficulties. He calls his artistic progress "Ereignis, Bewegung, Unterwegssein," an attempt, "Richtung zu gewinnen." He maintains that his poems are:

> . . . unterwegs: sie halten auf etwas zu. Worauf? Auf etwas Offenstehendes, Besetzbares, auf ein ansprechbares Du vielleicht, auf eine ansprechbare Wirklichkeit.
> Um solche Wirklichkeiten geht es, so denke ich, dem Gedicht.[11]

From these ideas it can be deduced that for Celan poetry is a means of leading the human sensibility from one level of experience into different ones. The historical world, which, for him, was overshadowed by the inhumane events which took place during the Nazi holocaust and in the subsequent post-war years cannot, he would have us believe, be given direct articulation. Therefore, language, if it is to survive, must point the way into new dimensions of reality in the hope that these will possess a credibility which the historical one lacks. Thus, in essence, Celan understands his poetry as a vehicle for the revelation of other areas of truth or experience, of other "Wirklichkeiten," which are concealed behind the veneer of what would normally be regarded as concrete, every-day reality.

As to the nature of the other realities which the poem has as its task to uncover, Celan is in the above statement deliberately vague. They are described as being "offenstehend," "besetzbar," and "ansprechbar," that is, as something which cannot be precisely defined and yet which, unlike historical reality, is accessible both to the imagination as well as to language. Furthermore, they may be regarded by an "Ich" as a "Du," that is, as something with which intimate contact can be made and a relationship formed.[12]

At the end of the Bremen speech Celan summarises these poetological ideas which he believes are peculiar not just to himself but also shared by other representatives of the post-war generation of poets. He states that on the one hand he feels himself to be "wirklichkeitswund" and "zeltlos," whilst on the other, "auf das unheimlichste im Freien" and "Wirklichkeit suchend."[13] In other words, he experiences alienation from the ethos of the contemporary world and as a result is an "unbehauster Mensch."[14] It is from this position that he finds a new freedom to discover other aspects of reality. He considers the language of poetry to be the instrument for carrying out this venture: it is a means of creating new possibilities of perception.

Celan continued and augmented these poetological concepts in his Büchner Prize acceptance speech entitled _Der Meridian_ (1960).[15] Once again he repeats the idea that poetry is a vital dynamic force which attempts to reach out and give expression to new areas of experience. This time, however, he stresses that a prime impetus for its development is not only a reaction against the emotionally paralysing effects of historical reality but also against the nature and intent of established literary convention. In addition to this he outlines the path he believes modern poetry is taking, offers his own interpretation of the aims and inner structure of the modern poem itself, and finally gives an account of the limitations with which it becomes confronted.

As will later become clear, whenever Celan refers in the _Meridian_ to the modern poem _per se_, he is also alluding to his own work which, it would seem, he deliberately intended to function as a model of trends he discerned within the wider context of the development of modern poetry as a whole.[16] Thus, an examination of the main points of the speech will facilitate a better understanding of the fundamental principles of his own lyric.

He begins with the premise that "Kunst," namely art in all its accepted traditional forms, has become clichéd and outworn, "ein marionettenhaftes, jambisch-fünffüßiges . . . kinderloses Wesen."[17] He shows that in certain of Büchner's dramas it is portrayed as being connected with "Mechanismus" and as a subject fit only for discussion by non-thinking "Automaten." As such, Celan argues, it has become problematical. It has reached such a high degree of sterility that it can no longer fulfil any useful function: it seems to have reached an end-stage in its development.

Celan then contrasts this state of aesthetic stagnation seen as being inherent in "Kunst" with that which he considers to be the progressive attitude of "Dichtung," that is, poetry. This he does through his own somewhat esoteric interpretation of the stance adopted by Lucile in Dantons Tod, which in his opinion exemplifies that of the poet.

He points out that while the other characters in the drama discuss "Kunst" and then "theatrically" play out their lives like wooden puppets in some sterile work of art, Lucile is speechless. She does not outwardly appear to understand or participate in the grotesque drama unfolding before her. She can comprehend neither the theories of art propounded by those nearest her nor the latters' modes of thinking, which to all intents and purposes resemble the woodenness of "Kunst" itself.

In Celan's eyes, however, Lucile is not as unreceptive to the external action as might at first be believed. According to him she has a far better understanding of this situation than the other characters involved. When they themselves speak about "Kunst," or else, like "Marionetten," discuss their own destiny as if it were an artificial "Kunstwerk," Lucile does not take their words or actions at face value, but rather, comprehends them at a much more fundamental level. In the words of Celan she is someone, "der hört und lauscht und schaut . . . und dann nicht weiß, wovon die Rede war. Der aber den Sprechenden hört, der ihn 'sprechen sieht', der Sprache wahrgenommen hat und Gestalt und zugleich auch . . . Atem, das heißt Richtung und Schicksal."[18] In other words, Lucile sees through the immediate reality with which she is confronted and is able to perceive not only its essential "Gestalt," but also the course it is taking and the final state at which it will arrive. Instead of participating in the events of the outside world, however, whose "Gestalt," Celan implies, she considers to be absurd, she remains aloof from them until finally she can endure the situation no longer and reacts against it. In a state akin to madness she utters the words "Es lebe der König,"[19] an act which would, of course, in the context of the drama, seal her own death warrant. Celan, however, interprets this as being a gesture of personal resistance and defiance, a means of freeing the self from the absurdity of the established order of things. Celan describes this gesture as being ". . . das Gegenwort, es ist ein Wort, das den 'Draht' zerreißt, das Wort, das sich nicht mehr vor den 'Eckstehern und Paradegäulen der Geschichte' bückt, es ist ein Akt der Freiheit. Es ist ein Schritt."[20]

He concludes that this is the same attitude inherent in "Dichtung," and by implication suggests that Lucile represents the poet and the stand he takes towards "Kunst" and historical reality, both of which seem to be wooden and absurd.

Through the figure of Lucile, therefore, Celan illustrates what he considers to be the essential characteristics of poetry and the position of its creator. The latter possesses superior insight into fundamental patterns of human behaviour and reality and finds them to be unacceptable, even absurd. As a result, he distances himself from them and resists them. The poetic act may then fulfil two functions: firstly, it can reveal new aspects of reality, in the case of Lucile, its absurdity for example, and secondly, it may be regarded as an outward demonstration of defiance against reality, a gesture of liberation from it.[21]

In the Meridian Celan also uses the figure of Büchner's Lenz to exemplify what for him are the motivating forces behind the creation of poetry and the conditions under which it is written. In doing so he adds new aspects to the basic situation as it was presented through the model of Lucile.

He discusses Lenz firstly as a "Künstler" and his attitude towards "Kunst," and secondly as a human being and his attitude towards life or "Dasein." This he does in order to offer a composite picture of the poet and the position he adopts both towards his poetry as well as to external reality, because for Celan the former is essentially the product of the latter.

The conception of art advocated by Lenz is, as Celan points out, diametrically opposite to that discussed by the characters in Dantons Tod. He quotes the following lines excerpted from the conversation about art in the Lenz fragment to illustrate its main character's aesthetic principles: ". . . Das Gefühl, daß, was geschaffen sei, Leben habe, stehe über diesen beiden und sei das einzige Kriterium in Kunstsachen . . . ."[22] That is to say, Lenz was of the opinion that art is to mirror life exactly and is to contain "das Natürliche" and "Kreatürliche," as it is later called.[23] As Celan states, this idea was also endorsed by Büchner himself, the historical Lenz, Mercier and later the Naturalists.[24]

However, Celan claims to detect in the Lenz fragment a note of dissent regarding this aesthetic conception. This occurs, he believes, when Lenz implies that if art is to present "das Natürliche als das Natürliche,"[25] then it is in danger of functioning as a "Medusenhaupt."[26] That is, instead of reproducing life as something living, it could very easily do the opposite and destroy it, turn it to stone, as it were. Thus, according to Celan, Lenz suddenly seems to doubt his own artistic principles: he also suggests that Büchner himself secretly shared this same scepticism.

This abrupt estrangement of the Lenz figure from his own personal conception of art is called in the Meridian speech "ein Hinaustreten aus dem Menschlichen, ein Sich-hinausbegeben in einen dem Menschlichen zugewandten und unheimlichen Bereich."[27] In other words, Lenz the artist is seen, as far as his artistic principles are concerned, to have taken a step from the known into the unknown: "Kunst" now becomes for him "etwas Unheimliches."[28]

Celan then postulates that not only modern art but also modern poetry is created under similar conditions:

> Vielleicht - ich frage nur, vielleicht geht die Dichtung, wie die Kunst, mit seinem selbstvergessenen Ich zu jenem Unheimlichen und Fremden, und setzt sich - doch wo? doch an welchem Ort? doch womit? doch als was? - wieder frei?[29]

That is to say, he suggests that poetry is the result of a process whereby the poet discards his hitherto accepted aesthetic norms, becomes totally alienated from them, and then in a state of liberation is free to search for radically new means of expression. Thus for Celan the starting off point for the creative process is a complete poetological *tabula rasa*.

Celan adopts the figure of Büchner's Lenz not only to outline a fundamental pattern in the progress of "Dichtung," but also to illustrate the poet's attitude towards life itself. Quoting the last lines from the original *Lenz* fragment--"Sein (i.e., Lenz') Dasein war ihm eine notwendige Last. - So lebte er hin . . ."[30]--he implies that this is essentially pessimistic. The reality of human existence is a burden which the poet would gladly escape.

Celan suggests once again, therefore, as he did through the model of Lucile, that the modern poet finds himself alienated both from hitherto accepted aesthetic values as well as from the immediate reality of life itself. As he had earlier pointed out, the writing of poetry is to be understood as an "Akt der Freiheit," a "Schritt" away from these two elements. The Lenz figure is also described as symbolically reaching this stage. This occurs, Celan maintains, when, on the 20th of January, he went into the mountains and fell prey to a state of overpowering madness, outwardly manifested by his desire to walk on his head. After having undergone this process of estrangement from his accustomed social and artistic modes of existence, Lenz then becomes confronted with what Celan calls an "Abgrund,"[31] which can be interpreted to mean completely new areas of uncharted experience.

In summary, therefore, through the examples of Lucile and Lenz Celan is illustrating his own conception of the conditions under which "Dichtung" is created. The poet must not only distance himself from standardised literary conventions, he must totally alienate himself from them. In addition to this he undergoes a similar process of estrangement from the very existence of which he has been a part. This having been accomplished he then faces other aspects of reality which can now be explored.

Having outlined this basic situation, Celan goes on to maintain that the modern poem is written when in the mind of the poet the boundary between the known and the unknown has been reached. He calls this position an "Atemwende": "Dichtung: das kann eine Atemwende bedeuten. Wer weiß, vielleicht legt Dichtung den Weg - auch den Weg der Kunst - um einer solchen Atemwende willen zurück."[32] In other words, meaningful progressive poetry is the result of a radical change of course from what is known and a refocusing of the imaginative perspective into the direction of areas which had previously not been recognised, that is, into "das Fremde," or "das Unheimliche." Every poem, Celan argues, is the product of a Lenz-like experience: every poet undergoes his personal "20. Jänner," whereby all that was once familiar to him becomes "fremd" and he finds himself face to face with the unknown, an "Abgrund."

In somewhat ambivalent and mystical terms Celan proceeds in the Meridian to enlarge further upon the poet's task after the so-called "Atemwende" has been reached. He states that once the poet's imagination has transcended into "das Unheimliche" something "quite different" becomes apparent to him: "Vielleicht wird hier, mit dem Ich - mit dem hier und solcherart freigesetzten befremdeten Ich, - vielleicht wird hier noch ein Anderes frei?"[33]

What is meant by this "Andere"? Celan once again becomes as elusive as he was in the Bremer Preisrede when referring to the "Wirklichkeiten" which he intended his own poems to express. Indeed, it may be assumed that "das Andere" and those "Wirklichkeiten," understood as being concealed areas of truth and experience lying beneath the surface of accepted empirical reality, are one and the same thing.[34] For Lucile, it would seem to be the absurdity of historical reality itself. What is made clear in the Meridian speech, however, is that it is the task of the poem to delve deeper into, and give expression to, the ethereal nature of "das Andere." As Celan writes:

> . . . ich denke, daß es von jeher zu den Hoffnungen des Gedichts gehört, gerade auf diese Weise auch in fremder - nein, dieses Wort kann ich jetzt nicht mehr gebrauchen -, gerade auf diese Weise in eines Anderen Sache zu sprechen - wer weiß, vielleicht in eines ganz Anderen Sache.[35]

Continuing the notion already encountered in the Bremer Preisrede that the language of poetry is something dynamic, Celan states in the Meridian that once the poem has reached the "Atemwende," the point of embarkation from the known into the unknown, it must proceed further into "das Fremde" and attempt to encompass the essence of "das Andere" in the hope that it can make its presence felt:

> Niemand kann sagen, wie lange die Atempause - das Verhoffen und der Gedanke - noch fortwährt. Das "Geschwinde", das schon immer "draußen" war, hat an Geschwindigkeit gewonnen; das Gedicht weiß das; aber es hält unentwegt auf jenes "Andere" zu, das es sich als erreichbar, als freizusetzen, als vakant vielleicht, und dabei ihm, dem Gedicht - sagen wir: wie Lucile - zugewandt denkt.[36]

This undertaking is not, however, as Celan proceeds to point out, without its problems. To illustrate this he refers once again to Büchner's Lenz who, when confronted with "das Unheimliche" after having inwardly disassociated himself from his previous life, became speechless. He was unable, as it were, to lead his imagination further into "das Fremde" because it represented for him an area of experience which lay far beyond his powers of comprehension. As Celan writes: "Lenz . . . ist . . . einen Schritt weiter gegangen als Lucile. Sein 'Es lebe der König' ist kein Wort mehr, er (sic) ist ein furchtbares Verstummen, es verschlägt ihm - und auch uns - den Atem und das Wort."[37]

This condition of speechlessness caused by an inability to comprehend the new dimensions of reality that are thought to exist beyond the boundaries of empirical reality is also prevalent in the modern poem, Celan maintains. "Das Gedicht heute," he asserts, evinces "eine starke Neigung zum Verstummen."[38] Using what he admits to be an "extreme Formulierung" he then describes the precarious position of the modern poem which he perceives as hovering in the balance between "Sprechen" and "Verstummen": "das Gedicht behauptet sich am Rande seiner selbst; es ruft und holt sich, um bestehen zu können, unausgesetzt aus seinem Schon-nicht-mehr in sein Immer-noch zurück."[39]

What this essentially means is that, according to Celan, the modern poem occupies a "Grenzposition" between the known and the unknown. It attempts to transgress all established boundaries of cognition and press forward into the unknown. In doing so, however, it is in danger of becoming a "Schon-nicht-mehr," that is, it can lapse into speechlessness because it does not possess adequate means to articulate that which has never before been perceived let alone expressed. It can become overwhelmed by the immensity of its task.[40] Thus, in order to exist at all, to continue "speaking," the poem must pull back, as it were, and remain within the boundaries of language so as to maintain its position as an "Immer-noch."

It will be noticed that both in the _Bremer Preisrede_ as well as in _Der Meridian_ the tendency of the poet towards "furchtbares Verstummen" is prominently featured. For Celan himself it was initially caused by numbing disbelief concerning events which were taking place in the historical world: these defied description through the medium of poetry. For Lucile this was also partly true: in the role which Celan gives her as a symbol of the modern poet per se her speechlessness was also caused by a fundamental scepticism of established artistic theory. In both cases the state of speechlessness before aspects of man-made reality was seen to be an almost necessary precondition for the creation of poetry itself: a kind of gestation period during which an "Atemwende" occurs and which can finally lead to the "Akt der Freiheit," the "Schritt" into new areas of experience which for Celan poetry represents.

With Lenz, however, speechlessness occurs not as a result of his experiences in the external world but when he is faced with "das Unheimliche." Through these examples, therefore, Celan is stressing that the creation of poetry in the modern age is beset with pitfalls. The poem comes into being only when the poet succeeds in overcoming the state of speechlessness he undergoes when faced with historical reality and is able to perceive new aspects of existence. However, the threat of speechlessness can again arise upon the recognition of the immense difficulties the language of poetry must face when endeavouring to encompass and give form to that which lies beyond the threshold of established cognition. The poem struggles to free itself from "Verstummen" only to be confronted with it once more.

Nevertheless, Celan insists in Der Meridian that the poet must not succumb to speechlessness when faced with intimations of "das ganz Andere." The poem must continue to press forward and endeavour to give it articulation. Because of the extreme isolation of the poet in modern times from the world around him Celan stresses that the poem can no longer be a vehicle for the dissemination amongst a wide public of universally recognised emotions or experiences, but, to the contrary, it offers a view of reality through the private, esoteric perspective of an individual. The poem, he maintains, is the product "einer radikalen Individuation"[41] and is "deutlicher noch als bisher - gestaltgewordene Sprache eines Einzelnen, - und seinem innersten Wesen nach Gegenwart und Präsenz."[42] It goes entirely its own way, independent of its possible readership and conventional literary norms: "Das Gedicht ist einsam und unterwegs. Wer es schreibt, bleibt ihm mitgegeben."[43]

As a result of the poet's loss of contact with society the "other" reality becomes the focal point of his attention. Repeating ideas which already occurred in the Bremer Preisrede, Celan states that "das Andere" whose presence the poem tries to discern behind all phenomena in the empirical world[44] fulfils the role of a "Gegenüber"[45] to which the poem addresses itself. Indeed, he regards the poem as a "Gespräch," often a "verzweifeltes Gespräch"[46] with the "other" sphere, a "Begegnung"[47] with it. It is in the course of this "Gespräch" that the presence of "das Andere" can be evoked in the poem:

> Erst im Raum dieses Gesprächs konstituiert sich das Angesprochene, versammelt es sich um das es ansprechende und nennende Ich. Aber in diese Gegenwart bringt das Angesprochene und auch durch Nennung gleichsam zum Du Gewordene auch sein Anderssein mit.[48]

Because "das Andere" is of such an intangible nature, Celan states that the language of the poem which seeks to express it will by necessity not lend itself to ready intelligibility. Quoting Pascal for support--"Ne nous reprochez pas le manque de clarté car nous en faisons profession!"--he concludes that modern poetry is obscure because it aims at reproducing as precisely as possible "encounters" with the other reality and the elusive sphere where it lies: "Das ist, glaube ich, wenn nicht die kongenitale, so doch wohl die der Dichtung um einer Begegnung willen aus einer - vielleicht selbstentworfenen - Ferne oder Fremde zugeordnete Dunkelheit."[49]

In concluding his outline of the trends in modern poetry towards the unlocking, exploration and evocation of hitherto unperceived spheres of cognition, Celan, however, also specifies the limits of such an enterprise. He implies that if the poem were to be wholly successful in capturing and conveying aspects of the "other" reality, it would have to become absolute. In other words, because this new reality is so radically divorced from accepted empirical reality, it is an absolute one which can only exist in an autonomous state in and for itself and having little or no relationship to anything else. Thus, for the poem to achieve its aim, it, too, would have to sever its bonds with empirical reality.

Its language would have to be devoid of all its original associations because in the final instance one absolute can only be fully described by another.

This, maintains Celan, is an impossibility: "Das absolute Gedicht - nein, das gibt es gewiß nicht, das kann es nicht geben!"[50] Nevertheless, he insists that inspite of an awareness of the essential non-feasibility of expressing the "absolute" in absolute terms every genuine poem has as its basis the "unerhörten Anspruch" to accomplish this, to become in fact an absolute poem.

Taking its limitations into account, however, Celan suggests that the most the poem can still do is to attempt to destroy its association with the empirical sphere, in which case its imagery would be: "Das einmal, das immer wieder einmal und nur jetzt und nur hier Wahrgenommene und Wahrzunehmende. Und das Gedicht wäre somit der Ort, wo alle Tropen und Metaphern ad absurdum geführt werden wollen."[51] Although the language of the poem is inherently bound to the empirical plane of reality--it can only reproduce that which is "nur jetzt und nur hier"--it can nevertheless attempt to disintegrate the empirical frame of reference by leading its images "ad absurdum" so that out of the resulting lack of customary meaning a new perspective might be gained, one which may be more commensurate to the intangible nature of "das Andere."

From the above ideas, therefore, it can be seen how Celan suggests that the poem persistently moves towards its goal in the knowledge that it can ultimately never be reached.

It constitutes an enterprise which he calls "Toposforschung," "Aber im Lichte des zu Erforschenden: im Lichte der U-topie."[52] The poet is always mindful of the fact that the means which he has at his disposal for mapping out the unknown sphere, the "U-topie," are relative and not absolute. What the poem undertakes resembles a labour of Sisyphus because, although it can attempt to break established barriers of human understanding, it can never completely transgress them so as to be the precise mirror image of that which lies on the other side. It is for this reason that in the Meridian speech Celan refers to "Dichtung" as being "diese Unendlichsprechung von lauter Sterblichkeit und Umsonst!"[53] In the final instance it cannot overcome the natural limits which are imposed upon it even though it never ceases trying to do so.

Despite the apparently deliberate ambivalence and complexity which impregnate Celan's poetological statements and frequently serve only to confuse rather than elucidate the arguments brought forth, the basic ideas propounded in Der Meridian are not as original as one might expect. For the most part they can be found once again, for example, in Hugo Friedrich's Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik von der Mitte des 19. bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts,[54] although admittedly Friedrich does not put as much emphasis as does Celan on the dangers of poetic "Verstummen."

What is important, however, is that the Bremer Preisrede and Der Meridian constitute a blueprint of Celan's own poetological intentions and thus offer an invaluable key for an understanding of his poetic world. In ensuing sections it will be shown how Celan's poetry, too, turns away from the immediate reality of the present and develops new linguistic forms for the exploration of the cerebral "Abgrund" into which it endeavours to penetrate. In addition to this it will become apparent that at every way and turn his poems become exposed to the dangers of speechlessness and that ultimately defeat is admitted upon the recognition of the absurdity of the whole undertaking.

2. The Basic Thematic Patterns of Celan's Poetry: *Mohn und Gedächtnis* (1952) and *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (1955).

Celan's first two volumes of poetry contain what were to prove to be some of the fundamental themes of his entire lyrical production. Here it is seen how he uses his poetry as a vehicle for the exploration of spheres of reality which often stand in contrast to the everyday empirical world. Concurrent to this the limitations which confront such an enterprise are brought to light. An examination of these two works will show both how Celan structures his basic themes and also how even at this early stage of his poetic development the problem of speechlessness becomes evident.

Already in *Mohn und Gedächtnis* the historical world, which for Celan meant the unbearable reality of the Nazi holocaust, is depicted in highly negative terms. The poems are filled with images of violence, decay and death which project into the present the traumatic memories of the past. Frequently Celan makes direct reference to his own personal fate during the war years, to that of members of his family, notably his mother, and also to that of the Jewish people as a whole.[55] In the poem "Dunkles Aug im September" the entire earth is described as being engulfed in pain as a result of the atrocities--grotesquely referred to as a kind of "game"--which are being committed on it:

> Steinhaube Zeit. Und üppiger quellen
> die Locken des Schmerzes ums Antlitz der Erde,
> den trunkenen Apfel, gebräunt von dem Hauch
> eines sündigen Spruches: schön und abhold dem Spiel,
> das sie treiben im argen
> Widerschein ihrer Zukunft.[56]

This is the reality, it will be remembered, which originally forced Celan, on his own admission, into a state of speechlessness, a condition which was to act as the impetus for his ensuing lyric.

Certain other poems of Mohn und Gedächtnis, however, show how it is possible to transcend inwardly this sphere of reality and reach out towards other ones. In two poems from the collection this process is expressed through images of travelling. In "Auf Reisen," for example, it is implied that the mind or "heart" of the lyrical subject has the capacity to leave familiar surroundings and undertake mysterious journeys into the unknown:

> Es ist ein Gehöft, da hält ein Gespann für dein Herz.
> Dein Haar möchte wehn, wenn du fährst - das ist ihm verboten.
> Die bleiben und winken, wissen es nicht.[57]

Also, in "Nachtstrahl" the lyrical "Ich" is depicted as having been able to transgress the limits of mundane reality and enter into new dimensions of experience: ". . . ich weilte auf Reisen im Spätland und (schrieb) Briefe an den Morgen."[58]

This theme is even more clearly presented in the opening lines of the poem "Der Stein aus dem Meer":

> Das weiße Herz unsrer Welt, gewaltlos verloren wirs
> heut um die Stunde des gilbenden Maisblatts:
> ein runder Knäuel, so rollt' es uns leicht aus den Händen.
> So blieb uns zu spinnen die neue, die rötliche Wolle
> des Schlafs an der sandigen Grabstatt des Traumes.[59]

Here, the reality of the external world is equated with a ball of wool which, as it unravels itself, eludes the grasp of the lyrical subject. Because of this, freedom is experienced to begin the creation of a new reality,-one whose substance in this case is connected not only with sleep and dream but also with death.

Although Celan's poetry, especially in its later stages, encompasses a wide variety of thematic aspects, his entire poetic oeuvre is a consistent attempt to explore and reveal by means of language spheres of experience such as the one outlined in the above poem which exist over and above the ordinary phenomenal and historical world. To use the terminology of his own poetological statements, his poems are "einsam und unterwegs": their destination is "das ganz Andere."

Already in his first two volumes of lyric Celan begins a trend which he was to continue in all his work, namely the writing of poems which elaborate upon the nature and intent of his own poetic processes.[60] An analysis of these will elucidate in more detail the way in which he carries out his poetic journeys into the unknown and what he hoped to achieve by them.

In the poem entitled "Der Reisekamerad" Celan makes it clear that his poetry is written under the aegis of the dead. Continuing the "journey" motif he states here that he regards his deceased mother as his "travelling companion" through life and implies that it is to the memory of her fate--she was murdered in a concentration camp--that his work is dedicated.[61] In addition to this he reveals that it is an important function of his poetry to search for "light." Like a kind of living dynamic organism it tries to reach out and point the way to a source of light which on one level at least may be understood as a symbol for hope where otherwise there appears to be only darkness and an atmosphere of death:

> Dieses Wort ist deiner Mutter Mündel.
> Deiner Mutter Mündel teilt dein Lager, Stein um Stein.
> Deiner Mutter Mündel bückt sich nach der Krume Lichts.[62]

This search for light by means of the poetic word is a frequent theme in Mohn und Gedächtnis and Von Schwelle zu Schwelle. In "Die Winzer" the wine makers, a symbol for poets,[63] are metaphorically described as having the task of expressing the pain which has been experienced on earth in order that future generations, once they, too, have had an intimation of this suffering, will be able to see past it and gain insight into the light of heaven:

> Sie herbsten, sie keltern den Wein,
> sie pressen die Zeit wie ihr Auge,

sie kellern das Sickernde ein, das Geweinte,
im Sonnengrab, das sie rüsten
mit nachtstarker Hand:
auf daß ein Mund danach dürste, später -
ein Spätmund, ähnlich dem ihren:
Blindem entgegengekrümmt und gelähmt -
ein Mund, zu dem der Trunk aus der Tiefe emporschäumt,
indes
der Himmel hinabsteigt ins wächserne Meer,
um fernher als Lichtstumpf zu leuchten,
wenn endlich die Lippe sich feuchtet.[64]

In "Sprich auch du" a similar idea is also expressed whereby poetry and the poet are called upon to explore and articulate a dark realm of shadows and death in the hope that finally by means of some mysterious process light will eventually become discernible in poetic language:

Gib ihm (deinem Spruch) Schatten genug,
gib ihm so viel,
als du um dich verteilt weißt zwischen
Mittnacht und Mittag und Mittnacht.

Blicke umher:
sieh, wie's lebendig wird rings -
Beim Tode! Lebendig!
Wahr spricht, wer Schatten spricht.

Nun aber schrumpft der Ort, wo du stehst:
Wohin jetzt, Schattenentblößter, wohin?
Steige. Taste empor.
Dünner wirst du, unkenntlicher, feiner!
Feiner: ein Faden,
an dem er herabwill, der Stern:
um unten zu schwimmen, unten,
wo er sich schwimmen sieht: in der Dünnung
wandernder Worte.[65]

From the poems quoted above, therefore, it becomes clear once more that Celan's poetry wishes to transcend the limits of ordinary cognition and recreate a new reality, a subjective poetic "Innenraum," as Silvio Vietta calls it,[66] which is often associated with suffering, death, darkness and night. In doing this it is hoped that poetic language will also convey something quite different from that which it concretely evokes. Thus the poetic evocation of darkness will produce intimations of light; that of death, life; that of pain and suffering, that is, hell, heaven, and so forth.[67]

When viewed as a whole, the positive attributes represent truth itself: "Wahr spricht, wer Schatten spricht." For Celan therefore the ultimate goal of his poetry is the expression of fundamental truth or, for want of a better word, that which is "absolute."

In poem after poem he depicts subliminal night landscapes into which the imagination has ascended and then describes what can be perceived there through the darkness. As the following quotations from one representative poem illustrate, what is perceived can vary from visions of beauty ("Wer sein Herz aus der Brust reißt zur Nacht, der langt nach der Rose"), to light ("Ihm legt sie das Licht auf den Teller"), to love ("ihm rauschen die Schatten der Liebe"), or else something quite ethereal which defies precise description ("ihm füllt sie die Gläser mit Hauch"). In addition to these entities, night can also allow access to seemingly impenetrable cosmic mysteries, frequently symbolised with Celan by the image of the "stone" ("Wer sein Herz aus der Brust reißt zur Nacht und schleudert es hoch: / der trifft nicht fehl, / der steinigt den Stein"), and also give intimations of "eternity" ("dem läutet das Blut aus der Uhr, / dem schlägt seine Stunde die Zeit aus der Hand").[68]

Celan's poems do not only reveal such abstract concepts as "Liebe," "Licht" or "Ewigkeit" in the cerebral regions which they explore but also a "Du" figure. The latter can occasionally be identified with the poet's dead mother, but more often than not it remains anonymous, sometimes referred to by means of such feminine abstract nouns as "Geliebte,"[69] "Feuerumsonnte,"[70] or "Übersternte."[71] In certain poems of Mohn und Gedächtnis and Von Schwelle zu Schwelle, Celan gives cryptic information concerning the function of his poetic language with regard to this mysterious "Du."

In the previously quoted excerpt from "Der Reisekamerad" it will be recalled that Celan refers to his poetry as being the "ward" of his dead mother--"Dieses Wort ist deiner Mutter Mündel." A similar image is also contained in "Vor einer Kerze" from Von Schwelle zu Schwelle which alludes in part to the relationship between Celan's poetry and the "Du." The poem describes a process whereby the lyrical subject perceives the "Totseins Tochter" of the mother. In the mind of the lyrical subject this figure is resurrected from the past and is made to appear in the present:

> Aus getriebenem Golde, so
> wie du's mir anbefahlst, Mutter,
> formt ich den Leuchter, daraus
> sie empor mir dunkelt inmitten
> splitternder Stunden:
> deines
> Totseins Tochter.
>
> Schlank von Gestalt,
> ein schmaler, mandeläugiger Schatten,
> Mund und Geschlecht
> umtanzt von Schlummergetier,
> entschwebt sie dem klaffenden Golde,
> steigt sie hinan
> zum Scheitel des Jetzt.[72]

After this mystical rite has been performed the lyrical "Ich" then addresses the figure that it has exorcised with the "Du" form and finally states:

> Du bleibst, du bleibst, du bleibst
> einer Toten Kind,
> geweiht dem Nein meiner Sehnsucht,
> vermählt einer Schrunde der Zeit,
> vor die mich das Mutterwort führte.[73]

What is implied in these lines is of significance for the theoretical function of Celan's lyric. They express the idea that poetry, "das Mutterwort," is considered to have the power to lead the "Ich," the poet himself, to the "Du" and to the temporal sphere where the latter exists.[74] Thus, for Celan the poetic word is a potent force: it can actually initiate a confrontation between an "Ich" and a "Gegenüber," a "Du." He considered his poems not just as a vehicle with which to describe encounters with a "Du" but also as being instrumental in bringing them about.

The importance and function of the language of the "Ich," which in many of Celan's poems is to be understood as the language of poetry itself, is further explained in other passages from these first two volumes. In the poem entitled "Wasser und Feuer," for example, the lyrical "Ich" describes how it gains contact with the "Du" at night. The force which brings about the desired union is the language of the "Ich": it prepares the "Du", which, through the symbol of the yews, is associated with the realm of death, for "marriage" with the "Ich":

> So warf ich dich denn in den Turm und sprach ein
> Wort zu den Eiben,
> daraus sprang eine Flamme, die maß dir ein Kleid
> an, dein Brautkleid[75]

At the conclusion of the poem the language of the "Ich" is again referred to. Here, the lyrical subject, after having described its perception of the "Du," which is equated with a brilliant source of light in darkness--"Und ich blicke hinüber zu dir / Feuerumsonnte"--indicates that it is its function to be the mouthpiece of the "Du":

> denk, daß ich war, was ich bin:
> ein Meister der Kerker und Türme,
> ein Hauch in den Eiben, ein Zecher im Meer,
> ein Wort, zu dem du herabbrennst.[76]

Understood in a poetological sense, therefore, the lines quoted above imply that the language of the "Ich" or the poet is not only necessary for causing a union with the "Ich" and the "Du" but also acts as a medium through which the latter can articulate itself. In other words the presence of the "Du" becomes through poetic language something tangible and palpable: the essence of the "Du" can be contained in poetry.

The notion that poetic language can incorporate the presence of the "Du" is also re-iterated in "Ein Körnchen Sands" from Von Schwelle zu Schwelle. In this poem the lyrical subject describes how it has been able to re-create an image of the "Du" which it has then "enshrouded" with language. The "Du" is likened to a tree and the language of the "Ich" is the bark which surrounds it:

> Stein, aus dem ich dich schnitzt,
> als die Nacht ihre Wälder verheerte:
> ich schnitzt dich als Baum
> und hüllt dich ins Braun meines leisesten Spruchs
> wie in Borke -77

These lines are fundamentally a description of what for Celan constitutes the nature of the poem and its function with respect to the "Du." The core of the poem is the "Du" itself which is experienced as an almost tactile entity. The language of the poem then acts as a kind of protective covering which helps keep the "Du" alive, so to speak, and without which it could not exist. Thus, the "Du" is present beneath the layer of language: the deeper this layer is explored the greater will be the experience of the presence of the "Du." Furthermore, just as bark outlines the physical contours of a tree so can the language of a poem give the "Du" form. It aids in making the "Du" visible, if only, as is most often the case with Celan's poems, as a lambent, intuitive vision.

In certain other poems Celan augments the idea that poetic language can evoke the existence of the "Du" and cause it to be tangibly perceived. In the following lines, for example, it is described how the lyrical subject illuminates the presence of the "Du" at night by means of its language, the image of the mouth functioning as a metonomy for poetic speech: "Nachts ist dein Leib von Gottes Fieber braun: / mein Mund schwingt Fackeln über deinen Wangen."78

On two occasions also, the "Ich" describes itself as being directly responsible for giving the "Du" its name, an act which, understood poetologically, enhances the idea that poetic language is necessary for providing insight into the existence and identity of the "Du."[79]

In keeping with the above mentioned ideas great prominence is accorded to the "Du" figure not just in Celan's first two volumes of lyric but throughout his entire poetic works. In continual variation the relationship between the lyrical "Ich" and the "Du" is described and it will be of value at this point to outline briefly the main features of this.

Thematically speaking, the "Ich" / "Du" poems are basically of three types. In the first of these the "Ich" describes the act of perceiving the "Du," which then frequently appears before it in the form of a mystical, nebulous vision. The poem entitled "Ich weiss" from Von Schwelle zu Schwelle will serve to illustrate this theme:

Und du, auch du -:
verpuppt.
Wie alles Nachtgewiegte.

Dies Flattern, Flügeln rings:
ich hörs - ich seh es nicht!

Und du,
wie alles Tagenthobene:
verpuppt.

Und Augen, die dich suchen.
Und mein Aug darunter.

Ein Blick:
ein Faden mehr, der dich umspinnt.

Dies späte, späte Licht.
Ich weiß: die Fäden glänzen.[80]

In the first four stanzas it is depicted how the "Ich" can divine the presence of the "Du" in a sphere of complete darkness. The "Du" is likened to a creature of this obscure sphere. The fact that it is now in the "Chrysalis" stage of its development suggests that, although it is at present hidden, there exists the possibility that at some future time it will emerge into full view.

In the last three stanzas the "Ich" describes how not only itself but also others as well have been searching for the "Du." The latter is revealed as a source of light in the all-engulfing darkness which has been ensnared by the "Blick" of the lyrical subject. Indeed, the "sight" of the "Ich" seems to form the cocoon in which the "Du" exists and through which its light shines.

This poem serves as a model for the theme of the perception by the "Ich" of the "Du." Continually in Celan's poetry it is shown how the "Ich" succeeds in catching a glimpse of what it seeks in an irreal landscape which is not only connected, as in this example, with night and darkness, but also occasionally with sea and water or ice and snow.[81]

In the second type of "Ich" / "Du" poem the "Ich" shows itself as being capable of not just perceiving the "Du" but as actively engaged in attempts to make contact with it. In such poems the process whereby the "Ich" and the "Du" are seen to come together to form a unity is frequently described. "Die Halde" is a representative example for this theme:

Neben mir lebst du, gleich mir:
als ein Stein
in der eingesunkenen Wange der Nacht.

O diese Halde, Geliebte,
wo wir pausenlos rollen,
wir Steine,
von Rinnsal zu Rinnsal.
Runder von Mal zu Mal.
Ähnlicher. Fremder.

O dieses trunkene Aug,
das hier umherirrt wie wir
und uns zuweilen
staunend in eins schaut.[82]

Here, the "Ich" and the "Du" are likened to two isolated stones rolling down a hillside. As becomes apparent in the final stanza these stones occasionally clash and collide, an action which symbolises the complete coming together of the "Ich" and the "Du." In certain other poems of this type the "Du" is also depicted as trying to make contact with the "Ich" so that the overall impression is gained that there takes place constant interaction between the two partners.[83]

In the third type of poem which deals with the relationship of the "Ich" and the "Du" full union between the two is portrayed. As the following lines show, this can be depicted as taking place in a dream-like state, somewhat akin to death:

Es fing zu regnen an in unserer Stube,
und unser Nachbar kam, Monsieur le Songe, ein hager Männlein.
Wir spielten Karten, ich verlor die Augensterne;
du liehst dein Haar mir, ich verlors, er schlug uns nieder.
Er trat zur Tür hinaus, der Regen folgt' ihm.
Wir waren tot und konnten atmen.[84]

--or else at night, during which time completely new spheres of experience often become apparent to the two partners, for example:

Nachts, wenn das Pendel der Liebe schwingt
zwischen Immer und Nie,
stößt dein Wort zu den Monden des Herzens
und dein gewitterhaft blaues
Aug reicht der Erde den Himmel.

Aus fernem, aus traumgeschwärztem
Hain weht uns an das Verhauchte,
und das Versäumte geht um, groß wie die Schemen der Zukunft.

Was sich nun senkt und hebt,
gilt dem zuinnerst Vergrabenen:
blind wie der Blick, den wir tauschen,
küßt es die Zeit auf den Mund.[85]

In summary therefore, Celan's "Ich" / "Du" poems describe three main activities: firstly, the gaining of perception by the "Ich" of the "Du," secondly, the process whereby the two attempt to make contact with one another, and lastly, the arrival at a state in which both partners have achieved their desired union. In the light of the poetological ideas analysed earlier these different types of poem constitute in their entirety an attempt to re-create the fundamental nature of the "Du" and the reality where it exists.

Thus far it has been shown that Celan's poems depict for the most part inner journeys into obscure spheres of the imagination. Here they strive to seek out and give intimations of the existence of such abstract notions as light, truth or eternity, or else make discernible the presence of a "Du" figure which itself is occasionally envisaged as a source of light.

Important implications are added to Celan's poetic endeavours, however, by the fact that the "other" mystical regions which his lyric explores and the "Du" figure existing there whose being his poems try to materialise are often shown to be inextricably connected with silence.[86] This idea is a continual motif in Mohn und Gedächtnis and Von Schwelle zu Schwelle.

That the night region evoked in Celan's poetry is also a sphere of silence is implied the most clearly in such poems as "Spät und Tief," "Aus Herzen und Hirnen," and "Die Winzer." In the first of these the lyrical subjects, "wir," are portrayed as inwardly entering into a sphere of night and death in the hope that in some mysterious way they will be able to resurrect the dead which are referred to as "the silent ones" ("die Stummen"). In the opening two lines it becomes apparent that this inner journey is one into silence:

> Boshaft wie goldene Rede beginnt diese Nacht.
> Wir essen die Äpfel der Stummen.[87]

Here, the night is likened to "goldene Rede," a designation which is very probably a corollary of the proverb "Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold." Thus the night is compared to "Schweigen" and complete communion with the dead takes place only after their silence has been experienced, symbolised through the action described in the second line.

In "Aus Herzen und Hirnen" the "Ich" and the "Du," having already been united, perceive emanations from the night sphere ("Halme der Nacht"), which they then proceed to explore. These "blades of night" are themselves "stumm" and thus the journey of the "Ich" and the "Du" does not just lead into night but also into silence: the two are synonymous:

> Aus Herzen und Hirnen
> sprießen die Halme der Nacht,
> und ein Wort, von Sensen gesprochen,
> neigt sie ins Leben.
>
> Stumm wie sie
> wehn wir der Welt entgegen:
> unsere Blicke,
> getauscht, um getröstet zu sein,
> tasten sich vor,
> winken uns dunkel heran.[88]

Finally in "Die Winzer," which has already in part been referred to, the vintners or poets are described as being confronted with the night region which they hope to penetrate with their language, symbolised with the image of the "Krückstock,"[89] and eventually find light. This other sphere, a product of their imagination (it is "das Erdachte"), is connected with a state of mystical impenetrability, symbolised through the image of the stone, and silence, "Schweigen," "das Stumme":

> Sie herbsten den Wein ihrer Augen,
> sie keltern alles Geweinte, auch dieses:
> so will es die Nacht,
> die Nacht an die sie gelehnt sind, die Mauer,
> so forderts der Stein,
> der Stein, über den ihr Krückstock dahinspricht
> ins Schweigen der Antwort -
> ihr Krückstock, der einmal,
> einmal im Herbst,
> wenn das Jahr zum Tod schwillt, als Traube,
> der einmal durchs Stumme hindurchspricht, hinab
> in den Schacht des Erdachten.[90]

"Nacht" and "Schweigen" are for Celan, therefore, one and the same thing. Thus the language of his poems has the somewhat paradoxical task of articulating this silence, of uncovering that which exists within its extremities.

As has already been stated, it is not just the night region that is connected with silence in Celan's poetry but also the "Du." Thus, the mysterious female figure frequently addressed with the "Du" form is portrayed as existing in a state of silence:

Schweigenden Leibes
liegst du im Sand neben mir,
Übersternte[91]

--and as refusing to speak:

Sie kämmt ihr Haar, wie mans den Toten kämmt:
sie trägt den blauen Scherben unterm Hemd.

Sie trägt den Scherben Welt an einer Schnur.
Sie weiß die Worte, doch sie lächelt nur.[92]

In at least two poems it is described how the "Du" is brought out of its silence. In "Zähle die Mandeln" this occurs after it has been given its name:

Dort erst tratest du ganz in den Namen, der dein ist,
schrittest du sichern Fußes zu dir,
schwangen die Hämmer frei im Glockenstuhl deines
Schweigens[93]

In "Gut" the silence of the "Du" is broken after it has been given a mouth with which to speak:

Und der mich peitschte, der Regen,
meißelt dir jetzt einen Mund,
der spricht, wenn die Sterne schrumpfen,
der schwillt, wenn die Himmel verebben.[94]

Paradoxically enough, however, whenever the "Du" does speak, it is depicted as doing so not with audible words but with silence, or else with a non-verbal language, as the following quotations illustrate:

Ich bin allein, ich stell die Aschenblume
ins Glas voll reifer Schwärze. Schwestermund,
du sprichst ein Wort, das fortlebt vor den Fenstern,
und lautlos klettert, was ich träumt, an mir empor.[95]

und du redetest wachsenden Dämmer,
und zwölfmal sagte ich du zur Nacht deiner Worte,
und sie tat sich auf und blieb offen[96]

In connection with this, the language which the "Ich" and the "Du" use to communicate with each other is also described as either being close to silence, bordering on the barely audible, or else it is silence itself, equated with the language of eyes:

Im Spiegel ist Sonntag,
im Traum wird geschlafen,
der Mund redet wahr.

Mein Aug steigt hinab zum Geschlecht der Geliebten:
wir sehen uns an,
wir sagen uns Dunkles[97]

Ich folgte dem Strahl deiner Augen,
und die Zunge lallte uns Süße...
(so lallte sie, so lallt sie noch immer.)[98]

Nimm dieses Wort - mein Auge redet's dem deinen!
Nimm es, sprich es mir nach,
sprich es mir nach, sprich es langsam,
sprich's langsam, zögr es hinaus,
und dein Aug - halt es offen so lang nach![99]

Indeed, the most perfect union between the "Ich" and the "Du" is seen to take place in silence after all words have fallen away:

> Blicklos
> schweigt nun dein Aug in mein Aug sich,
> wandernd
> heb ich dein Herz an die Lippen,
> hebst du mein Herz an die deinen:
> was wir jetzt trinken,
> stillt den Durst der Stunden;
> was wir jetzt sind,
> schenken die Stunden der Zeit ein.
>
> Munden wir ihr?
> Kein Laut und kein Licht
> schlüpft zwischen uns, es zu sagen.[100]

From the above examples, therefore, it becomes clear that the "Gegenüber" of Celan's poems is essentially silence.[101] Both the cerebral night region or "das Andere" which his poetry depicts and the "Du" figure existing there, to which it attempts to lend tangible form, are each silent.

Certain metapoems of Mohn und Gedächtnis and Von Schwelle zu Schwelle give information about the nature of the poetic word and its relationship to silence. In "Abend der Worte," for example, words are called "Rutengänger im Stillen,"[102] that is, it is their function to sound out and articulate the sphere of silence. This idea is enlarged upon in "Mit wechselndem Schlüssel" where language, "das Wort," is described as a versatile instrument for unlocking the mysterious realm of silence, symbolised here as elsewhere through the image of snow:[103] "Mit wechselndem Schlüssel / schließt du das Haus auf, darin / der Schnee des Verschwiegenen treibt. // .... //

Wechselt dein Schlüssel, wechselt das Wort, / das treiben darf mit den Flocken. / Je nach dem Wind, der dich fortstößt, / ballt um das Wort sich der Schnee."[104]

In other poems intimations as to the type of language needed to express "das Verschwiegene" are given. First of all it is made clear that the language of the everyday historical world is unsuitable for this task. In "Abend der Worte" the present age is called a "Wortnacht," a time when the true meaning and value of language have been destroyed by what are called the "Doggen der Wortnacht," presumably a reference to those forces in society such as the mass media which have debilitated the written and spoken word.[105]

This impression of the ineffectualness of language in the modern world is furthered in "Nächtlich geschürzt," where language is described as something lifeless ("Ein Wort - du weißt: / eine Leiche"), which must be revitalised: "Laß uns sie waschen, / laß uns sie kämmen, / laß uns ihr Aug / himmelwärts wenden."[106]

As a result of this lack of faith in the power of current language Celan goes as far as to imply that words must be avoided. In the following lines, for example, the lyrical subject is depicted as having been blinded or deceived by words and consequently it turns to the inner night region where the sister figure is perceived amidst the silence, symbolised once more through the image of snow:

> Da du geblendet von Worten
> ihn stampfst aus der Nacht,

den Baum, dem sein Schatten vorausblüht:
fliegt ihm das Aschenlid zu, darunter das Auge der Schwester
Schnee zu Gedanken verspann -[107]

In the poem "Flügelnacht," which is a vision of the "other" sphere, this negative impression of language is continued. That which is perceived in the mind's eye seems to be destroyed as soon as it is put into words:

Flügelnacht, weither gekommen und nun
für immer gespannt
über Kreide und Kalk.
Kiesel, abgrundhin rollend.
Schnee. Und mehr noch des Weißen.

Unsichtbar,
was braun schien,
gedankenfarben und wild
überwuchert von Worten.[108]

Implied in these lines is the idea that words are actually a barrier or a hindrance to clear perception of "das Andere." No words, that is, silence, would be preferable, a fact which, of course, would cast profound doubt on Celan's poetic undertaking.

In contrast to these poems, which sharply attack the efficacy of language, are others which envisage a more perfect form of language, one which would have the capacity to reproduce the elusive nature of "das Andere," the "Du" and their silence. In "Waldig," for example, it is described how "das Verwunschene," another designation for "das Andere," can only be articulated by a language which manifests itself in sleep and dream.[109] In "Ich hörte sagen" the existence of a type of utopian language is postulated, one which would set an aura of meaning around that which is essentially intangible. This action is symbolised through the images of the stone and the word which causes a circle to form around it:

> Ich hörte sagen, es sei
> im Wasser ein Stein und ein Kreis
> und über dem Wasser ein Wort,
> das den Kreis um den Stein legt.[110]

Finally, in the first and last stanzas of "Mit zeitroten Lippen" the enigmatic utopian language of the night region is visualised and the lyrical subject is portrayed as eventually succeeding in gaining possession of it:

> Im Meer gereift ist der Mund,
> dessen Worte der Abend hier nachspricht
> im Angesicht seiner Länder.
> Murmelnd spricht er sie nach,
> mit zeitroten Lippen.

. . . .

> Sieh, unsre Lippen schwellen,
> zeitrot auch sie wie der Abend,
> murmelnd auch sie -
> und der Mund aus dem Meer
> taucht schon empor
> zum unendlichen Kusse.[111]

In two poems from Von Schwelle zu Schwelle, "Strähne" and "Argumentum e silentio" Celan becomes more specific about the language necessary for evoking the silence of the "Du" and "das Andere." In the first of these the word "Strähne" is described as actually having the power to cause the "Du" to appear from its sphere of silence, evoked once again through snow imagery, and to allow its presence to be articulated. In the diction of the poem, use of this particular word makes the "Fernen" which separate the "Ich" from the "Du" to become diminished and thus enable an "erdigen Mund" to act as the mouthpiece of the "Du." This word is described as being one:

> . . . das mich mied,
> als die Lippe mir blutet' vor Sprache.
>
> Dies ist ein Wort, das neben den Worten einherging,
> ein Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens,
> umbuscht von Singrün und Kummer.[112]

In other words, the language which can materialise the "Du" is one which reflects the silence of the "Du." It is a language "in the image of silence," elusive and ethereal in nature, as it seems to exist on a plane of reality which ordinary language cannot penetrate.

In the second poem under discussion here the type of language required to articulate the region of night is described. It is referred to as a word which is no longer a part of normal language but one which has been "silenced." It is only after its removal from current usage that it can retain its pure form, remain impervious to linguistic misuse, and bear witness to the realm of night and the light which is felt to exist there:

> Ihr, der Nacht,
> das sternüberflogene, das meerübergossne,
> ihr das erschwiegene,
> dem das Blut nicht gerann, als der Giftzahn
> die Silben durchstieß.
>
> Ihr das erschwiegene Wort.[113]

From the above passages, therefore, it becomes apparent that the ideal language necessary for precise articulation of "das Andere" and the "Du" is one whose very essence is paradoxical. It must give intimations of silence: in fact, it must approach silence. It seems to exist beyond the borders of accepted forms of language and encompasses the silence which lies on the other side.

Celan appears to entertain a "love/hate" relationship towards language. On the one hand it is stated with some confidence that words can penetrate into silence and verbalise it, whereas on the other, they are likened to corpses which can destroy perception of "das Andere." Indeed, the impression is gained that the only adequate way to convey the essence of the "other" sphere and to bring about an encounter with the "Du" is through silence itself. The language of poetry, therefore, has the task of approximating as far as this is feasible "ein Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens." It must be the manifestation of "das erschwiegene Wort."[114]

In two poems from _Von Schwelle zu Schwelle_, however, the theme of poetic defeat is documented. In the first of these, "Mit Äxten spielend," the lyrical subject expressly states that its modes of language, symbolised through the image of the "axes," have been entirely ineffectual in penetrating the shadowy realm of the dead and its silence:

> Sieben Stunden der Nacht, sieben Jahre des Wachens:
> mit Äxten spielend,
> liegst du im Schatten aufgerichteter Leichen
> - O Bäume, die du nicht fällst! -
> zu Häupten den Prunk des Verschwiegenen,
> den Bettel der Worte zu Füßen,
> liegst du und spielst mit den Äxten -
> und endlich blinkst du wie sie.[115]

Implied here is that "das Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens" has not yet been obtained and, as a consequence, a situation of poetic stagnation has arisen. The words at the disposal of the lyrical subject are regarded as being outworn and useless and a state of artistic resignation is presaged.

A similar situation is also described in "Stilleben," reproduced here in full:

> Kerze bei Kerze, Schimmer bei Schimmer, Schein bei Schein.
>
> Und dies hier, darunter: ein Aug,
> ungepaart und geschlossen,
> das Späte bewimpernd, das anbrach,
> ohne der Abend zu sein.
>
> Davor das Fremde, des Gast du hier bist:
> die lichtlose Distel,
> mit der das Dunkel die Seinen bedenkt,
> aus der Ferne,
> um unvergessen zu bleiben.
>
> Und dies noch, verschollen im Tauben:
> der Mund,
> versteint und verbissen in Steine,
> angerufen vom Meer,
> das sein Eis die Jahre hinanwälzt.[116]

The poem depicts the process of perceiving "das Andere," preparation for which, as the dark incantation of the first line suggests, has all the trappings of a quasi-mystical rite. The eye, a frequent image with Celan, is the organ of perception. It has been closed off from the outside world and now contemplates a mental "Innenraum," variously called "das Späte," "das Fremde," "die Ferne," or "das Taube."[117] In the final stanza, however, it becomes apparent that that which the eye has observed cannot be vocalised. The mouth, once again a metonomy for speech, is seen to be in a state of petrifaction, a condition which signifies linguistic paralysis.

Viewed as poetological statements, therefore, these two poems describe the occurrence of lyrical speechlessness. The language of poetry has not proved itself equal to the task of articulating the silence of "das Andere" and thus defeat would seem imminent. This type of negative "Verstummen" which prevents verbalisation of newly discovered sensory perspectives is identical to that which Celan described in the Meridian speech. There it was thought to be a considerable obstacle facing modern poetry as a whole. In "Mit Äxten spielend" and "Stilleben" he makes it clear that it is a problem which his own work also confronted.

The above analysis of the main thematic areas of Celan's first two volumes of lyric will suffice to delineate the most important features of his poetological ideas in all their abstractness and complexity.

It was shown that Celan's poems depict for the most part visions of inner cerebral regions where they attempt to manifest the presence of such qualities as "light" or "truth," or else the dead or a "Du" figure which, it is imagined, exist there. The subliminal mental sphere of experience, "das Andere," and the "Du" are both equated with "Schweigen," and so it becomes the difficult task of the poetic word to create an awareness of its exact opposite, namely, silence.

Problems arise with this undertaking, however. On the one hand confidence is expressed as to the ability of words to act as "Rutengänger im Stillen," or as a "key" which can unlock "das Verschwiegene," whereas on the other, they are severely criticised. Whilst the most perfect understanding of "das Andere" and the "Du" is often portrayed as taking place in a state of silence, it is obvious that the poetic word, if it is to be commensurate to its task, cannot itself lapse into silence. If it did so it would cease to exist. Thus a language is sought, variously described as "ein Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens" or "das erschwiegene Wort," which would indeed have the emotive power to evoke silence. Intimations are given, however, that this endeavour has been unsuccessful and that poetic failure or speechlessness is an ever-present possibility. It may be said, therefore, that Celan's poetry finds itself caught up in the tension of the negative "Verstummen" of poetic language and the desired language of "Schweigen," the former constantly threatening to extinguish the latter.

These problems of language, "Verstummen," "Schweigen" and the overall difficulties of expressing "das Andere" and the "Du" are a major theme of Celan's lyric which will be analysed in the ensuing sections. It will become apparent that Celan's poetry never actually does succumb completely to speechlessness, although occasionally this state is arrived at. Instead, ironically enough, it continues to discuss it as a potential danger and seeks new ways to avoid it.

3. *Sprachgitter* (1959): *Problems of Language and Perception and the Technique of the "Atemwende."*

The majority of poems in Celan's *Sprachgitter* revolve around the theme of perception, or lack of it, of "das Andere" or the "Du" and the attendant problems of poetic speech and silence, and as such, they are continuations of those thematic aspects already analysed in *Mohn und Gedächtnis* and *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle*.

That the danger of the negative "Verstummen" of poetic language before the desired goal of "Schweigen" is of central importance in this volume is indicated by the fact that it forms the subject matter of the title poem "Sprachgitter" quoted here in full:

> Augenrund zwischen den Stäben.
>
> Flimmertier Lid
> rudert nach oben,
> gibt einen Blick frei.
>
> Iris, Schwimmerin, traumlos und trüb:
> der Himmel, herzgrau, muß nah sein.
>
> Schräg, in der eisernen Tülle,
> der blakende Span.
> Am Lichtsinn
> errätst du die Seele.
>
> (Wär ich wie du. Wärst du wie ich.
> Standen wir nicht
> unter *einem* Passat?
> Wir sind Fremde.)
>
> Die Fliesen. Darauf,
> dicht beieinander, die beiden
> herzgrauen Lachen:
> zwei
> Mundvoll Schweigen.[118]

From the title it becomes clear that the poem concerns itself with the nature of language: without this title the full import of the poem would be lost. The eye, perhaps the most essential organ for the perception of "das Andere" in Celan's poetry,[119] and which may be equated with the "mind's eye" or the "poetic eye," is described as being in a state of captivity behind bars. From the title it can be assumed that these are bars of language which act as an impediment to perception. That which the eye perceives cannot be comprehended in its entirety within the mind or, by implication, become transmuted into poetry, because human language imposes limits on thought. The mind of the anonymous lyrical subject seems to be locked within the confines of itself: it is described in terms of a dark dungeon where the eyes act as windows. That which is perceived through the eyes is blurred and cannot be formed into a total image.

Stanzas 2 to 4 describe the process of perception under these conditions. The eye lid opens, a glance is released, but little impression is made upon the iris of the eye: it remains "traumlos und trüb," unresponsive to external stimuli, allowing nothing to penetrate it other than sensations of opaque vagueness. The mind can only surmise that "der Himmel" is nearby and that it itself possesses a soul because only a small amount of light is admitted through the bars. Everything in this cell can only be experienced in an oppressive, claustrophobic half-light: "herzgrau" because the heart, the seat of emotion, so to speak, has been dulled into insensitivity as a result of the lack of response from within the mind.

Suddenly in the midst of all this gloom the mind of the "Ich" focuses its attention on its relationship with the "Du": although they both move in the same direction, "under one trade wind," they are strangers. This sudden flash of thought seems to have been provoked in the mind of the "Ich" as a direct result of its musings as to its mode of perception and communication. From this it follows that just as the mind realises that it is prevented from fully assimilating the outside world because of the barrier of language, so, for the same reason are the "Ich" and "Du" kept apart. They have no effective means of communicating with each other. They are like two "heart-grey puddles" lying on the flagstones of this dungeon, existing in a state of silence because as yet they have no language which can bring them together. Klaus Weissenberger writes, however, that although the "Ich" and "Du" are silent, "ihr Schweigen ist 'mundvoll': sie hätten sich etwas zu sagen."[120] That is to say, this "Schweigen" has latent possibilities of finding expression: it has reached the point where it can almost be articulated but in the final instance this does not come about because language is regarded as an impediment and the desired "erschwiegene Wort" has not yet been found.

The poem "Sprachgitter," therefore, sums up Celan's attitude to language and its relationship to human experience. Language can be a barrier to thought and perception: indeed, it can cause lethargy and stagnation in the perceptive faculties. In the words of Manfred Züfle: "Die menschliche Situation ist die des Auges hinter den Gittern der Sprache. Oder: die Erfahrung ist die Gefangene der Sprache."121 This in itself can cause speechlessness: language is unable to communicate with the "Du" and its "Schweigen" because of its own inadequacy. As Harald Weinrich points out, Celan's poetry destroys the basic confidence of earlier poets in the poetic word:

> Während 'man' sonst die Sprache unreflektiert auf die Sache hin durchstößt, verfängt sich hier (in Sprachgitter) der Schreiber im Netz, im Gitter, im Käfig der Worte. Worte sind aber machtlos. Das ist eine neue Erfahrung. Mallarmé, Valéry, Gottfried Benn, sie haben gerade in der semantischen Reflexion ihren Glauben an die Macht des Wortes bestätigt gefunden. Paul Celan erfährt die Ohnmacht der Worte.122

As a result of this profound scepticism concerning the ability of language to evoke the presence of the "Du" and "das Andere" and effect a "Begegnung" with them other poems of the volume Sprachgitter criticise language and emphasise the value of "Schweigen." Thus, in the poem entitled "Unten," for example, the "Ich" declares that it has come to regard the language which it uses to gain contact with the "Du" as being redundant: "das Zuviel meiner Rede."123 In "Matière de Bretagne" it is felt to have no more worth than base metal: "mein Mund / spie seinen Schotter."124

It is made clear that that which communicates most meaningfully to the lyrical "Ich" from the "other" realm are silent voices, which also seem to emanate from a different dimension of time:

> Keine
> Stimme - ein
> Spätgeräusch, stundenfremd, deinen
> Gedanken geschenkt, hier, endlich
> herbeigewacht: . . . .[125]

Or else, the non-vocalised language of the eyes, referred to as "Augenstimmen."[126]

Once again, it is in a state of silence that a union with the "Ich" and the "Du" can be most clearly envisaged:

> Föhniges Du. Die Stille
> flog uns voraus, ein zweites,
> deutliches Leben.[127]

In connection with this, the poem "Unten" already mentioned describes how in the course of the journey of the "Ich" towards the "Du" the "Gast-Gespräch" of their eyes becomes dismantled syllable by syllable and impervious to empirical reality, ("tagblind"), until the language of the "Ich" is completely absorbed by the silence of the "Du":

> Heimgeführt Silbe um Silbe, verteilt
> auf die tagblinden Würfel, nach denen
> die spielende Hand greift, groß,
> im Erwachen.
>
> Und das Zuviel meiner Rede:
> angelagert dem kleinen
> Kristall in der Tracht deines Schweigens.[128]

In the poem "Schliere" "das Andere," translucently described as "erschautes Verloren" and "wirklichgesponnenes Niemals," is seen to give a sign, one which is experienced as a language of silence:

ein durchs Dunkel getragenes Zeichen,
vom Sand (oder Eis) einer fremden
Zeit für ein fremderes Immer
belebt und als stumm
vibrierender Mitlaut gestimmt.[129]

As the poem "In Mundhöhe" implies, however, that which is perceived from the realm of "das Andere" must not be verbalised as this would only taint its purity. Insights from this sphere must be kept silent because a language has not yet been discovered which would adequately convey their meaning: "In Mundhöhe, fühlbar: / Finstergewächs. // . . . . // Blattnarben, Knospen, Gewimper. / Äugendes, tagfremd. / Schelfe, wahr und offen. // Lippe wußte. Lippe weiß. / Lippe schweigt es zu Ende."[130]

In at least two poems from Sprachgitter, however, the "Ich" and the "Du" are seen to gain possession of a word which makes the "Schweigen" of "das Andere" a more approachable entity, thus proving that there is a possibility of discovering a language "nach dem Bilde des Schweigens." In the poem "Blume," for instance, the "Ich" is shown to be in pursuit of the "stone," the ultimate intangible mystery of "das Andere." It joins forces with the "Du" and in the darkness they both find a word:

Wir waren
Hände,
wir schöpften die Finsternis leer, wir fanden
das Wort, das den Sommer heraufkam:
Blume.[131]

It is suggested that this word has the latent capacity to bring about a union with the "Ich" and the "Du" and to unlock the silence of the latter. This action is evoked through the image of the bell clappers swinging freely in open space and has its equivalent in at least two other poems where each time it signifies successful penetration into the realm of silence:[132]

> Wachstum.
> Herzwand um Herzwand
> blättert hinzu.
>
> Ein Wort noch, wie dies, und die Hämmer
> schwingen im Freien.[133]

In connection with this theme the poem "Niedrigwasser" describes the function of an anonymous word which is in the possession of the "Ich" and the "Du," collectively referred to as "wir," but which has not yet been articulated. It is still attached to the "Herzwand" and can only be communicated from one to the other by means of their eyes:

> Niemand schnitt uns das Wort von der Herzwand.
>
> . . . .
>
> Ein Aug, heute,
> gab es dem zweiten, beide,
> geschlossen, folgten der Strömung zu
> ihrem Schatten, setzten
> die Fracht ab (niemand
> schnitt uns das Wort von der - -), bauten
> den Haken hinaus - eine Nehrung, vor
> ein kleines
> unbefahrbares Schweigen.[134]

This unarticulated word becomes the "cargo" of the "Ich" and the "Du"; it enables them to reach out and penetrate, if only to a limited extent, the "untraversable silence." It allows access like a spit of land jutting out into the sea.

In "Niedrigwasser," then, Celan shows that possession of a "silent" word, "das erschwiegene Wort," untainted by human language and which can give the silent realm of "das Andere" meaning, is indeed a possibility. It is a notable feature of this word that, with the exceptions of "Strähne" ("ein Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens") and "Blume," it always remains in Celan's poetry, logically enough, unnamed. It is a word which could not possibly be expressed in human speech as it belongs solely to the "Innenraum" of the poet's mind. It is a utopian goal whose existence can only be intuitively imagined. Even the words "Strähne" and "Blume," although concretely named, are not the sought after "erschwiegene Wort": the former is a word in the "image" of silence, whereas the latter, taken in isolation, is incomplete. It requires still another word, as yet not found, in order for the silent sphere to become tangible--"Ein Wort noch, wie dies, und die Hämmer / schwingen im Freien."

From the above poems, therefore, it can be seen that the problems of poetic speech and its confrontation with the "Schweigen" of "das Andere" and the "Du" are a major preoccupation of the volume Sprachgitter. Language is felt to be an inadequate instrument for gaining access to the silence of "das Andere" and for communicating and effecting a "Begegnung" with the "Du." Indeed, it is suggested that the intended union with the "Du" can only take place in the state of silence and not, as was hoped in metapoems from the first two volumes, through the language of poetry. In addition to this it is implied that any insights obtained into "das Andere" must themselves be kept silent because of the impurity of language. Finally, in contrast to this highly negative view of language Celan insists in two poems firstly, that a certain word can come close to being an image of silence although by itself it cannot accomplish this, and secondly, that "das erschwiegene Wort" does in fact exist, even if it cannot be articulated as it is still attached "to the wall of the heart."

Despite Celan's awareness of the limitations of language for the execution of his poetic task many poems of Sprachgitter still endeavour to pursue their course towards "das Andere" and the "Du." In doing so they frequently demonstrate the very same basic pattern which in the Meridian speech it was claimed could be detected in modern poetry in general.

There, it will be remembered, Celan maintained that poetry can arise as the result of an "Atemwende," a position of rest from which the poet must decide whether to continue to probe "das Unheimliche," or else succumb to the state of speechlessness and admit defeat. The poem, if it is to resist failure, must draw itself "aus seinem Schon-nicht-mehr in sein Immer-noch zurück." The poem "In die Ferne" from Sprachgitter describes this moment of poetic decision:

> Stummheit, aus neue, geräumig, ein Haus -:
> komm, du sollst wohnen.

Stunden, fluchschön gestuft: erreichbar
die Freistatt.

Schärfer als je die verbliebene Luft: du sollst
atmen und du sein.[135]

The sensation of muteness referred to in the first line must not be confused with the silence, "Schweigen," of "das Andere," or the threat of speechlessness, "Verstummen," which can occur if the poem is unable to proceed further and express "das Andere." Rather, it is the emotion which the poet feels when confronted with "das Andere." It is the pause called in Der Meridian "die Atempause - das Verhoffen und der Gedanke"[136] which occurs during an "Atemwende" creating a kind of breathing space for the poet where it is determined if he will gain the courage to plot his course for "das Andere" or whether he will be struck dumb by the enormity of his insight.

The title of the poem "In die Ferne" conveys the direction into which the lyrical subject, to be understood as the poet, is about to set off. The goal which has to be attained, "die Freistatt," appears to be accessible. The "Stunden," which in Celan's imagery denote the times of greatest readiness to perceive "das Andere," are graded, suggesting a definite logical progression. They are "fluchschön" because, whilst they allow greatest perception of "das Andere," they can also lead to failure, the danger of "Verstummen."

From the tone of composure present at the end of the poem it would appear that the possibility of inner penetration of "das Andere" is imminent. It may be assumed that the brief period of "Stummheit," the "Atempause," has afforded the lyrical subject an opportunity to make the decision to press forward into "das Andere" and thus the threat of total "Verstummen" has been averted.

This "Atempause" or "Atemwende" is not just portrayed in the abstract as in "In die Ferne." In certain poems of Sprachgitter it actually becomes an integral stylistic device. The poem entitled "Schuttkahn" will effectively illustrate this technique:

> Wasserstunde, der Schuttkahn
> fährt uns zu Abend, wir haben,
> wie er, keine Eile, ein totes
> Warum steht am Heck.
>
> ....
>
> Geleichtert. Die Lunge, die Qualle
> bläht sich zur Glocke, ein brauner
> Seelenfortsatz erreicht
> das hellgeatmete Nein.[137]

The first stanza describes a slow moving, lethargic journey at evening, the time when perception of "das Andere" is most likely. Stagnant weariness, even hopelessness, is suggested by the image of the "Schuttkahn"; it is as if all that which is outworn and ready for discarding is being laboriously carted to the scrap heap. The journey is carried out blindly as if in a trance: no questions are asked as to its purpose. The stanza finally breaks off in an atmosphere of despondent aimlessness.

The dotted line inserted between the two stanzas serves to accentuate the pause which occurs there. This is the "Atempause" which was so welcomed in the poem "In die Ferne." It is during this period of "Stummheit" that the poem is held in a state of flux, hovering between its "Schon-nicht-mehr" and its "Immer-noch," the possibility of its continuance on the desired course.

In this instance the "Immer-noch" is, in fact, attained and the poem manages to assert its existence once more. The second stanza conveys a feeling of relief. The lung fills itself to capacity, sending the "Seelenfortsatz," the thoughts of the soul, speeding on its way towards "das Andere," not as articulated words but as breath. The other realm is here described as "das hellgeatmete Nein"--a negation, a nothingness, a designation often found from Sprachgitter on. But this nothingness shines with a distinct clarity. It is "hellgeatmet," illuminated by the thoughts of the lyrical subject and yet forever denying an answer to the question as to its ultimate meaning.

A similar structure can be observed in other poems of Sprachgitter--movement towards a goal, a notable caesura denoting the "Stummheit" which occurs during an "Atemwende" and then a final regaining of a stable position. In the following excerpt from the poem entitled "Aber," for example, which describes the process of perception by an "Ich" of a "Du," the lyrical subject interrupts the portrayal of its progress and tells of the "Atempause" which it has had to undergo. Indeed, use of the word "aber" itself causes the pause to come about:

> Strahlengang, immer, die
> Spiegel, nachtweit, stehn
> gegeneinander, ich bin,
> hingestoßen zu dir, eines
> Sinnes mit diesem
> Vorbei.
>
> Aber: mein Herz
> ging durch die Pause, es wünscht dir
> das Aug, bildnah und zeitstark,
> das mich verformt-:
>
> die Schwäne,
> in Genf, ich sah's nicht, flogen, es war,
> als schwirrte, vom Nichts her, ein Wurfholz
> ins Ziel einer Seele[138]

For the most part the "Atempausen" contained in other poems of Sprachgitter are even shorter than the one in "Aber," but in each case a definite turning point can be discerned after the pauses which allows the respective poems to assert themselves against impending disintegration and proclaim successful insight into "das Andere" or completed union with the "Du."[139]

There are, however, poems in Sprachgitter where the "Immer-noch" is not attained, where the vision of the poet becomes paralysed and his thought processes threatened with imminent disintegration. This state of affairs signals the onset of "furchtbares Verstummen," which according to Celan in Der Meridian the modern poem frequently falls prey to.

The poem "Matière de Bretagne"[140] is such an example. The first stanza contains a depiction of an interior landscape of festering decay which confronts a lyrical subject:

> Ginsterlicht, gelb, die Hänge
> eitern gen Himmel, der Dorn
> wirbt um die Wunde, es läutet
> darin, es ist Abend, das Nichts
> rollt seine Meere zur Andacht,
> das Blutsegel hält auf dich zu.

It is evening, the time when "das Andere" is at its most perceptible within the poetic mind. Here, as in many of Celan's earlier poems, it is associated with suffering and pain: the "sail of blood" is approaching the lyrical subject as if it is on a ship which is to carry him into the sea of "das Nichts."

In the second stanza images of decay and stagnation continue. Everything on land is languid and choked with weeds: "Trocken, verlandet / das Bett hinter dir, verschilft / seine Stunde." Although the lyrical subject is faced with this vision active participation in it seems impossible. Everything around him ignores his presence, existing in a world of its own. It is as if an invisible dividing wall were present between him and the substance of his vision:

> . . . oben,
> beim Stern, die milchigen
> Priele schwatzen im Schlamm, Steindattel,
> unten, gebuscht, klafft ins Gebläu . . . .

The only beauty perceived in this torpid scene is "eine Staude Vergänglichkeit," which presumably raises the hope that visions such as these need not be permanent.

The third stanza completely breaks off from the description of this stagnant landscape and its unmitigating gloom, and the thoughts of the lyrical subject are turned in a flash to his hands, which in Celan's poetry are chiefly used to signify a means of reaching out towards the "Du" and communicating with "das Andere."[141] Here the lyrical subject shows himself to be completely alienated from these instruments of perception:

> (Kanntet ihr mich,
> Hände? Ich ging
> den gegabelten Weg, den ihr wiest, mein Mund
> spie seinen Schotter, ich ging, meine Zeit,
> wandernde Wächte, warf ihren Schatten - kanntet ihr mich?)

He has gone the way which they have led him like a blind man desperately groping out into the unknown, but now he considers the possibility that these hands have been leading him along a false trail: that they are not concerned with directing him to his goal, but that they are total strangers to him, an arbitrary, impersonal force. Furthermore, he speaks of his language in highly derogatory terms. If the hands have led to false visions, then the language which has described these visions must also be worthless.

As a result of the knowledge that the means of communicating with "das Andere" have failed the poetic sensibility is brought in the fourth stanza to a halt. Manifestations of "das Andere" are waiting to be pursued and yet the lyrical subject cannot proceed further because of the searing doubt that has arisen as to the means for carrying this out. Thus, the fourth stanza is an almost panic-stricken recapitulation of the images contained in the first one: in a mood of despair the lyrical subject points out once more the signs of "das Andere" and silently pleads with the hand to follow:

Hände, die dorn-
umworbene Wunde, es läutet,
Hände, das Nichts, seine Meere,
Hände, im Ginsterlicht, das
Blutsegel
hält auf dich zu.

But the hands do not follow: the original vision, and thus the poem itself, hovers on the brink of disintegration. This penultimate stanza is essentially an attempt to keep a hold on that vision, as it were, possibly in order to explore it further, but it eludes the grasp of the lyrical subject because of the inadequacy of his perceptive faculties.

The beginning of the fifth and last stanza implies that a renewed attempt is being made to force the hands to begin their creative, perceptual functions again, but ultimately this is renounced. It is decided that they must be taught to sleep, an act which suggests resignation. In the final instance the lyrical subject becomes left without any apparent means with which to probe "das Andere":

Du
du lehrst
du lehrst deine Hände
du lehrst deine Hände du lehrst
du lehrst deine Hände
schlafen

"Matière de Bretagne," therefore, is basically a metapoem. It begins with the depiction of an interior vision of "das Nichts," but instead of pursuing this further, a halt is made in which the means used to explore and express such a vision are reflected upon and found to be defective. Then in the fourth stanza the images of the first are repeated at a greatly accelerated pace in an attempt to retrieve the original vision. But this attempt, too, becomes abandoned and the means of poetic communication and perception, symbolised through the image of the hands, are finally laid to rest. This action is to be understood as a declaration of poetic defeat.

It will be noticed that concurrent to the recognition that both the faculties for gaining insight and the means of expressing it are unsatisfactory the language of the poem in the third stanza begins to dissipate into a paratactical stammering: ". . . mein Mund / spie seinen Schotter, ich ging, meine Zeit, / wandernde Wächte, warf ihren Schatten - kanntet ihr mich?" The fourth stanza attempts to overcome this with rapid, staccato-like utterances, but in the last stanza the stumbling effect begins again and, by dint of the fact that there is no final full stop, the poem ends with an impression of incompleteness. It has become speechless. To use the terminology of Celan's own poetics, it has failed to gain its "Immer-noch" position and has degenerated into a "Schon-nicht-mehr." It testifies to its own "Verstummen" before "das Andere" and can proceed no further.

Disintegration of the poetic vision during a confrontation with "das Andere" is also documented in other poems from Sprachgitter. "Entwurf einer Landschaft,"[142] for example, is an attempt to envisage light within the other sphere. Its presence is felt to be discernible in the midst of a landscape characterised with images of stark and barren impermeability:

> Rundgräber, unten. Im
> Viertakt der Jahresschritt auf
> den Steilstufen rings.
>
> Laven, Basalte, weltherz-
> durchglühtes Gestein.
> Quelltuff,
> wo uns das Licht wuchs, vor
> dem Atem.

The poem, however, is unable to pursue the source of light and delve deeper into this imaginary landscape. In the third and last stanza the "Stunde," that point in time in Celan's poetry where "das Andere" is at its most attainable, is described as being "unbetretbar," which signifies that no further progress can be made. This knowledge causes the poem to end with an image of irritating absurdity which serves to highlight the ultimate meaninglessness of this cerebral vision:

> Ölgrün, meerdurchstäubt die
> unbetretbare Stunde. Gegen
> die Mitte zu, grau,
> ein Steinsattel, drauf,
> gebeult und verkohlt,
> die Tierstirn mit
> der strahligen Blesse.

Thus, this poem reaches a state bordering on "Verstummen" not signalled as was the case in "Matière de Bretagne" with the obvious disintegration of its language, but by its descent into absurd incoherence. The poetic mind seems to have been overtaken by a kind of inertia which prevents it from further seeking clarity.

A similar situation of not being able to make headway into the sphere of "das Andere" is also evinced in the poem "Bahndämme, Wegränder, Ödplätze, Schutt."[143] The cerebral landscape evoked by the title suggests a scene of uncompromising barrenness, through which, as becomes apparent in the first stanza, a source of light can be vaguely discerned:

> Lichtgewinn, meßbar, aus
> Distelähnlichem:
> einiges
> Rot, im Gespräch
> mit einigem Gelb.

In addition to this a sensation of movement is perceived, "das letzte reitende Sandkorn," the image of the grain of sand also representing, as it does elsewhere, a minute glimmering of light in darkness.[144] However, the lyrical subject is described as not being able to distinguish clearly the light source which has been presented to the mind's eye because an invisible barrier impedes its view:

> Die Luftschleier vor
> deinem verzweifelten Aug.

The second stanza, closed off in parentheses, instead of pursuing the original vision, completely changes the subject as it were and pauses to reflect on certain events of the past which ostensibly have nothing to do with the situation of marred perception evoked just previously:

(Die
Augärten, damals, das
gelächelte Wort
vom Marchfeld, vom
Steppengras dort.
Das rote Ringelspiel, kling.
Wir
drehten uns weiter.)

After this quite unexpected interruption, whose purpose, it seems, was to offer some respite from the difficulties of gaining greater insight, the final stanza abruptly focuses its attention once again on the very same situation as was described in the first verse and even repeats the imagery in compressed form:

Der Sandkornritt, das
Auge, ihm zugewandt.
Die Stundentür und
ihre Geräusche.

This recapitulation gives the impression that no progress has been made in understanding the source of light which was vaguely discerned in the "other" sphere. The gateway to "das Andere" ("die Stundentür") can be envisaged but it cannot be entered. All that can be documented is the failure to gain access. Thus in this poem the frustrating impasse in which the poetic sensibility can find itself when confronted with manifestations of "das Andere" is clearly demonstrated. Hope for success diminishes. Finally, the poem tends to come to a halt, signalled by the fact that instead of pressing forward it ends up by merely repeating itself. The poetic mind has been forced into a state of claustrophobic lethargy and as a result the poem ends up by saying nothing. It has fallen mute.

Seen in their entirety, therefore, the poems of *Sprachgitter* vacillate between a feeling of confidence as to the possibility of attaining "das Andere" and gaining contact with the "Du" and one of despair, where the language of the individual poem threatens to, or actually does, dissipate and become meaningless. Celan seeks a language in which to formulate his vision of "das Andere" but often his search is seen to be in vain. His visions frequently become disjointed and the language at his disposal mirrors the disintegration of his thought processes. Thus the poems are constantly hounded with the dangers of "Verstummen."

At this stage of his development, however, Celan refuses to capitulate. In his next two volumes of poetry, *Die Niemandsrose* and *Atemwende*, he continues to record his search for the desired means of expression and the difficulties which accompany this. The next section will examine this process and the consequences it has for his poetry.

4. *Die Niemandsrose (1963) and Atemwende (1967): Renewed Attempts to Produce a Language in the Image of Silence*.

In the two volumes *Die Niemandsrose* and *Atemwende* Celan's conception of poetic language, its nature and function, and its relationship to his poetic visions is a major theme. In addition, the journeys into "das Andere" continue and, although the attempts to make contact with the anonymous "Du" are still described, there is a tendency in Die Niemandsrose for the "Gegenüber" of certain individual poems to be concretely named. The presence of such personages as the Chassidic Rabbi Löw and the Russian/Jewish poet Ossip Mandelstamm is evoked and they are directly addressed;[145] places, situations and events from the past are relived within the poetic "Innenraum";[146] and also the presence of God is experienced there.[147]

Once again, however, as in the previous volumes, Celan continues to criticise language as a means with which to explore "das Andere" and encounter the "Du." The poem "Das Wort vom Zur-Tiefe-Gehn," for example, suggests the by now familiar idea that it is not through any kind of written language that the depths of "das Andere" may be probed but through the silent language of the eyes:

> Das Wort vom Zur-Tiefe-Gehn,
> das wir gelesen haben.
> Die Jahre, die Worte seither.
> Wir sind es noch immer.
>
> Weißt du, der Raum ist unendlich,
> weißt du, du brauchst nicht zu fliegen,
> weißt du, was sich in dein Aug schrieb,
> vertieft uns die Tiefe.[148]

Variations of these ideas are developed further in other poems. Words, for example, are described as being a burden:

> O diese Wege, galaktisch,
> O diese Stunde, die uns

die Nächte herüberwog in
die Last unsrer Namen.[149]

Complete union between the "Ich" and the "Du" takes place in nothingness:

und zuweilen, wenn
nur das Nichts zwischen uns stand, fanden
wir ganz zueinander.[150]

It is in a state of absolute silence that the "Schwester" and the dead can be most clearly perceived:

Schweigen, wie Gold gekocht, in
verkohlten
Händen.

Große, graue,
wie alles Verlorene nahe
Schwestergestalt:

Alle die Namen, alle die mit-
verbrannten
Namen. Soviel
zu segnende Asche. Soviel
gewonnenes Land
über
den leichten, so leichten
Seelen-
ringen.[151]

It is the wish of the "Ich" to be absorbed by this silence:

Es ist das Gewicht, das die Leere zurückhält,
die mit-
ginge mit dir.
Es hat, wie du, keinen Namen. Vielleicht
seid ihr dasselbe. Vielleicht
nennst du auch mich einst
so.[152]

Once again, therefore, the dichotomy between "Sprache" and "Schweigen" becomes prominently featured. As a poet, however, Celan is of course obliged to use language and so a compromise has to be sought. Beginning in Die Niemandsrose the important theme is introduced of the kind of language which must be developed which will convey the essence of the poet's experiences with "das Andere," "das Nichts" and their "Schweigen." The poem "Bei Wein und Verlorenheit" offers some insight into the nature of this language:

> Bei Wein und Verlorenheit, bei
> beider Neige:
>
> ich ritt durch den Schnee, hörst du,
> ich ritt Gott in die Ferne - die Nähe, er sang,
> es war
> unser letzter Ritt über
> die Menschen-Hürden.
>
> Sie duckten sich, wenn
> sie uns über sich hörten, sie
> schrieben, sie
> logen unser Gewieher
> um in eine
> ihrer bebilderten Sprachen.[153]

The first two stanzas of this metapoem describe the poet's encounter with God in the realm of "das Andere," evoked through the images of "Schnee" and "Ferne," whose "höchstes, umröcheltes . . . haderndes Wort" he fervently wishes to perceive as it is stated in the poem "Zürich zum Störchen."[154] That it is difficult to avoid altogether the sphere of that which is merely human in order to bring about this encounter is suggested by the image of the "Ritt über die Menschenhürden." The empirical sphere of human reality is presented as a series of hurdles which must be leaped over and is thus considered to be a hindrance.

The language which the lyrical subject and God use to communicate with each other and, by implication, the language utilised to describe this communion, namely poetry itself, is called a "Gewieher." That is to say, something which is barely intelligible to human understanding and to some, perhaps, even downright laughable.[155]

Hence, there arises the need on the part of those who are not attuned to this alien language to transform it into more concrete terms of reference which their sensibilities can comprehend. This, however, only results in a distortion of its true meaning and purpose: "sie logen unser Gewieher um." It cannot be translated as the language which the poet must use to describe his experiences with "das Andere" is one that endeavours to dissociate itself completely from the empirical sphere. It is one which contains few images which act as fixed sensory anchors for tangible empirical concepts and emotions. The "Gegenüber" which it seeks to articulate is itself absolute and without image. Poetic language must therefore strive to attain as high a degree of "absoluteness" as possible, must free itself from established empirical associations and become "unbebildert." Only in this way can it become commensurate to the intangible, elusive mystery of "das Andere."

Celan's poetic language attempts more and more from Die Niemandsrose on to disintegrate normal speech processes in order to lead itself away from the empirical sphere of reference and approach the "Schweigen" of the "other" realm.

The metapoem "Anabasis" describes this process precisely:

Dieses
schmal zwischen Mauern geschriebne
unwegsam-wahre
Hinauf und Zurück
in die herzhelle Zukunft.

Dort.

Silben-
mole, meer-
farben, weit
ins Unbefahrne hinaus.

Dann:
Bojen-,
Kummerbojen-Spalier
mit den
sekundenschön hüpfenden
Atemreflexen -: Leucht-

glockentöne (dum-,
dun-, un-,
unde suspirat
cor),
aus-
gelöst, ein-
gelöst, unser.

Sichtbares, Hörbares, das
frei-
werdende Zeltwort:

Mitsammen.[156]

The poem portrays the ascent of its own language towards a state of absolute freedom. In the first stanza its progress is described in terms of pure movement. It is attempting to move forward into "die herzhelle Zukunft," yet its progress is slow because no sooner does it make an upward movement than it is forced back like the dynamic swell of a wave on the surface of the sea which is heading for the shore.

Indeed, the movement of this language on its way to "das Andere" is described with sea imagery. The further it progresses, the more does it disintegrate. It becomes reduced to a "Silbenmole," a jetty of loosely connected syllables stretching out into the unknown. These syllables become separated even more: they are compared to a line of buoys which just barely manage to point out a navigable course in the unknown sea. They are called "Kummerbojen" presumably because of the hazardous position they occupy on the verge of complete dissipation. Nevertheless, they are still capable of emitting flashes of meaning: meaning which cannot be concretely defined as it consists of "hüpfenden Atemreflexen," that is, fleeting insights into silence.

Finally this language all but evaporates into barely discernible inarticulate sounds which are, however, still able to give direction "ins Unbefahrne." They are likened to "Leuchtglockentöne" in this nebulous, silent sphere, which can point the way to "das Andere" even though they are in themselves practically devoid of any concrete meaning.

These almost silent remnants of language have entirely divorced themselves from the empirical sphere of cognition. They now belong to "das Andere" allowing its manifestations to become visible and audible. In addition to this they essentially constitute a word in which union between the "Ich" and the "Du" can be palpably experienced--"das freiwerdende Zeltwort: Mitsammen."

The poem "Anabasis" offers a paradigm of Celan's poetic intentions with regard to language. In ever increasing measure it becomes his chief aim to destroy the associations which language has directly with the empirical world and in doing so remove images from it which describe intangible experience by means of analogy with concrete phenomena. The result is what Kurt Oppens calls a language which is "entmaterialisiert,"[157] that is, one which has become purified to such an extent that it may be regarded as a translucent image or reflection of silence.

Many other poems from Die Niemandsrose and Atemwende give further details as to the nature of this language to which they themselves aspire. The following collage of quotations will illustrate this.

It is severally stated that if "das Wahre" is to be articulated, then poetic language must be disintegrated:

> . . . ver-
> zwergt, verwinzigt, ver-
> nichtet,
> verbracht und verworfen,
> sich selber der Reim, -
> so kommt es
> geflogen, so kommts
> wieder und heim[158]

The sphere where the dead exist can only be penetrated by a language which has been broken down into particles: "schwirrender Wortsand," "Kleinewiges / Silben."[159] It is these particles of language close to silence which help cast light upon the mystery of the "stone":

Die Abende graben sich dir
unters Aug. Mit der Lippe auf-
gesammelte Silben - schönes,
lautloses Rund -
helfen dem Kriechstern
in ihre Mitte. Der Stein,
schläfennah einst, tut sich hier auf[160]

And it is by means of "Reichtümer an / verloren-vergällter / Sprache" that the "Schatten" of "das Andere" can be perceived.[161]

Through this process of linguistic disintegration and purification the poem becomes a

Singbarer Rest - der Umriß
dessen, der durch
die Sichelschrift lautlos hindurchbrach,
abseits, am Schneeort[162]

It consists of a language of sensory fragments: "Silbriges: / Hufsprüche, Schlaflied- / gewieher."[163] By means of these barest components of language called a "Buchstabenschimmer" the name of the "Du" becomes apparent[164] and it is "jenseits der Spaltworte"[165] that the "Gestalt" of the poem's "Gegenüber" can be most clearly envisaged.

For Celan the usual impressions evoked by language must be destroyed in order to allow completely new ones to come into existence: "wirf sie (die Sprache) weg, wirf sie weg, / dann hast du sie wieder."[166] Only through this new use of language can the truth be glimpsed:

Ein Dröhnen: es ist
die Wahrheit selbst
unter die Menschen
getreten,
mitten ins
Metapherngestöber.[167]

The utopian aim of Celan's poem is to be ultimately freed from the necessity of being reliant upon established human language, to be elevated above it, so to speak, and to be as one with the silence and nothingness of "das Andere":

> Erblinde schon heut:
> auch die Ewigkeit steht voller Augen -
> darin
> ertrinkt, was den Bildern hinweghalf
> über den Weg, den sie kamen,
> darin
> erlischt, was auch dich aus der Sprache
> fortnahm mit einer Geste,
> die du geschehen ließt wie
> den Tanz zweier Worte aus lauter
> Herbst und Seide und Nichts.[168]

The new utopian language which arises out of the fragments of the old one is described in the following lines from the poem "Was geschah?"

> Sprache, Sprache. Mit-Stern. Neben-Erde.
> Ärmer. Offen. Heimatlich.
>
> Wohin gings? Gen Unverklungen.[169]

It is the location of a new world of experience. "Ärmer," because it has discarded all extraneous ballast which hitherto had caused it to mask the truth; "offen," because it has limitless possibilities for expressing all facets of experience; "heimatlich," because it belongs to the sphere where the origin of truth is instinctively felt to lie. It leads out "gen Unverklungen," that is, towards the silence of "das Andere."

The increasingly esoteric nature of the language and imagery of most of the poems of Die Niemandsrose and Atemwende is the result of Celan's attempt to dissociate poetry from the concrete empirical level of experience as far as this is possible in order that it might point the way and even give articulation to areas of experience which would normally defy the capabilities of human perception and modes of expression. As his poetry progresses, the substance of its imagery becomes more and more translucent, ethereal and even vaporous. The sensations it conveys refuse for the most part to be fixed and defined; rather, the poems are charged with emotive forces, intangible yet dynamic and compelling, which are meant to represent the poet's own experiences vis-à-vis the new areas of reality he is probing. His attempts to write in an "unbebilderte Sprache" constitute a never ending search for the "Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens" which will give "das Andere" its "Gestalt" and effect a "Begegnung" with the "Du."

The majority of the poems of Die Niemandsrose and Atemwende continue to be visions of encounters with the "Du" and the "other" sphere. They consist of myriads of thought particles, transmuted into "word particles" ("schwirrender Wortsand," "Silbriges," "Buchstabenschimmer"), which disperse and collide rather like streams of consciousness in the hope of bringing about a convergence of the truth as it is innately envisaged.

For the most part in these two volumes the lyrical "Ich" appears to capture, if only fleetingly, glimpses of the "Du" and the "other" reality, a fact which implies that poetic language is performing its desired function.

As was the case in Celan's previous works, however, these moments of success are counterbalanced by the documentation of defeat, and the threat of "Verstummen" once again becomes conspicuous. Accompanying the feeling of confidence as to the possibility of fulfilling the poetic task there is the ever-present suspicion that the very foundations on which this poetry is built are essentially wrong and that "das Andere" and its manifestations cannot be brought to light. The following examples will illustrate these negative trends.

Despite Celan's resolve to fashion his modes of lyrical expression so as to be commensurate to a language in the image of silence, mistrust is still voiced in those very words from which he is trying to wrest clarity:

> Es wird stumm, es wird taub
> hinter den Augen.
> Ich sehe das Gift blühn.
> In jederlei Wort und Gestalt.[170]

Faced with a vision of "das Andere" his decision to proceed further breaks down on one occasion into a mood of despairing panic:

> Das aufwärtsstehende Land,
> rissig,
> mit der Flugwurzel, der
> Steinatem zuwächst.
>
> Auch hier
> stürzen die Meere hinzu, aus der Steilschlucht,
> und dein Sprach-
> pockiger, panischer
> Ketzer
> kreuzt.[171]

Often, Celan seems to lose control over the language he is using: it slips from his grasp, as it were, and refuses to be led in the required direction:

> Schwer-, Schwer-, Schwer-
> fälliges auf
> Wortwegen und -schneisen.
>
> . . . .
>
> Wann,
> wann blühen, wann,
> wann blühen die, hühendiblüh,
> huhediblu, ja sie, die September-
> rosen?
>
> Hüh - on tue ... Ja wann?
>
> Wann, wannwann,
> Wahnwann, ja Wahn, -
> Bruder
> Geblendet, Bruder
> Erloschen, du liest,
> dies hier, dies:
> Dis-
> parates -: Wann
> blüht es, das Wann,
> das Woher, das Wohin und was
> und wer
> sich aus- und an- und dahin- und zu sich lebt, den
> Aschenton, Tellus, in seinem
> vor Hell-
> hörigkeit schwirrenden
> Seelenohr, den
> Aschenton tief
> im Innern unsrer
> sternrunden Wohnstatt Zerknirschung? Denn
> sie bewegt sich, dennoch, im Herzsinn.[172]

In the poem entitled "Die Silbe Schmerz" the cerebral vision portrayed seems to move forward at a pace which is too rapid for the language, symbolised through the image of the "Madersterne im Abgrund," which is to shed light upon it. The result is that this language is left behind, as it were, slowly stumbling along, vainly trying to catch up:

> . . . In Särgen,
> Urnen, Kanopen
> erwachten die Kindlein
> Jaspis, Achat, Amethyst - Völker,
> Stämme und Sippen, ein blindes
>
> Es sei
>
> knüpfte sich in
> die schlangenköpfigen Frei-
> Taue -: ein
> Knoten
> (und Wider- und Gegen- und Aber- und Zwillings- und Tausendknoten), an dem
> die fastnachtsäugige Brut
> der Madersterne im Abgrund
> buch-, buch-, buch-
> stabierte, stabierte.[173]

In the above examples with their often tortuous style which can tax the patience of even the most sympathetic reader Celan clearly demonstrates how the brink of poetic speechlessness can be reached as a result of the inadequacy of language for expressing his interior visions. Such poems lead nowhere. They fail to emulate "das erschwiegene Wort" and thus have the tendency to dissipate into nonsense.

This dead-end situation is also signalled in at least two other poems by the fact that Celan seems to give up all attempts to lead his unruly language towards "das Andere" and instead of twisting and distorting it with all manner of verbal acrobatics, he tries to express his themes in a more conventional and outdated way. Thus, the conflict between the "Ich" and the difficulties of expressing the silence of the "Du" is described in "Selbdritt, Selbviert" by means of a child's nursery rhyme:

> Krauseminze, Minze, krause,
> vor dem Haus hier, vor dem Hause.
>
> Diese Stunde, deine Stunde,
> ihr Gespräch mit meinem Munde.
>
> Mit dem Mund, mit seinem Schweigen,
> mit den Worten, die sich weigern.[174]

In "Eis, Eden," from which the first two verses are quoted below, the theme of perception of "das Andere" is presented in the form of an anachronistic Romantic poem with decidedly Heinesque overtones:

> Es ist ein Land verloren,
> da wächst ein Mond im Ried,
> und das mit uns erfroren,
> es glüht umher und sieht.
>
> Es sieht, denn es hat Augen,
> die helle Erden sind.
> Die Nacht, die Nacht, die Laugen.
> Es sieht, das Augenkind.[175]

Poems such as these, therefore, show that the seriousness of Celan's poetic endeavours has been put into question. Instead of pursuing his goal with the usual sense of urgency he appears here to give up. He is listlessly playing with language. His choice of these outmoded lyrical forms is a symptom of his own resignation with regard to his poetic subject matter.

The manifestations of speechlessness as illustrated above--stumbling, stammering language and frivolous use of jaded poetic styles--bear witness both to the enormous difficulties Celan continually experiences when trying to force language beyond its normal limits and also to his own recognition of the impasse which he has reached.

What happens, then, when he takes his poetological ideas to their ultimate conclusion and eliminates entirely "das Zuviel meiner Rede"[176] or "das bunte Gerede des Anerlebten," as it is also called,[177] that is, the plethora of inner impressions which the poetic mind associates with "das Andere," and refines his language to such an extent so as to cause the desired state of "Schweigen" to become tangible within the bounds of a poem? What is the result when a poem attempts not to describe objectively what the imagination encounters in the sphere of silence but actually reproduces the silence itself by means of a completely "unbebilderte Sprache"? The following excerpt from "Keine Sandkunst mehr" provides an answer to these questions:

> Deine Frage - deine Antwort.
> Dein Gesang, was weiß er?
>
> Tiefimschnee,
> Iefimnee,
> I - i - e.[178]

Here, Celan indicates that his "Gesang," his poetry, is wholly inadequate for the conveying of his thoughts which lie in the realm of silence, symbolised once again through the image of snow. Having expressed this idea the poem then halts and itself dissipates into silence, signalled by the fact that it is dismantled syllable by syllable until only the merest vestiges of speech are left. It would logically follow that if the desired silence were to be most accurately reproduced, then the next stage would be no language at all, just a blank page.

It is therefore highly ironical that the language which Celan uses to convey most completely the silence of "das Andere" is itself brought into a state of "Verstummen." The mode of expression used to articulate silence has transformed itself into a "non-language." It has become strained to such an extent that it dissolves into total meaninglessness and thereby fails to provide coherent insight into silence.[179]

This is precisely the situation present in one of the poems of Nelly Sachs already cited where she, too, disintegrates language in order to give intimations of the essence of the "Schweigereich":

> O - A - O - A -
>
> ein wiegendes Meer der Vokale
> Worte sind alle abgestürzt[180]

Both Celan and Sachs force their language to extremes to achieve a similar goal and their poetry thus suffers as a consequence. In plain terms, such radical linguistic contortions do not lead to cogent communicative poetry but rather to gibberish.

As the above analysis has shown, therefore, Celan tenaciously continues in Die Niemandsrose and Atemwende to develop ways in which to express the "Schweigen" of "das Andere." His aim is to produce an "unbebilderte Sprache," one from which normal semantic connotations have been removed that will approximate the "Wort nach dem Bilde des Schweigens."

Lack of success in this area is, however, continually documented. Faltering style and a tone of resignation presage the onset of defeat and possible speechlessness. Even when poetic language succeeds in approaching silence most closely by totally eradicating all sensory associations, it degenerates into a series of meaningless sounds and thus graphically falls speechless. In the final instance, silence can only be articulated by silence, a fact which in itself endangers poetic speech. In the words of W.H. Rey:

> So bleibt Celans Sprache, indem sie sich über die Bildhaftigkeit erheben will, doch dem Bilde verhaftet. Zwar weist sie auf die Unzulänglichkeit alles bildhaften Sprechens hin; aber sie verfällt zugleich der eigenen Kritik, da ihr die angestrebte Aussageform versagt ist.[181]

Despite the constant setbacks Celan makes it clear in Atemwende that he never loses sight of the "Du":

> (Ich kenne dich, du bist die tief Gebeugte,
> ich, der Durchbohrte, bin dir untertan.
> Wo flammt ein Wort, das für uns beide zeugte?
> Du - ganz, ganz wirklich. Ich - ganz Wahn.)[182]

--and that he will continue to describe his search for light in the darkness of the non-empirical sphere:

> Fadensonnen
> über der grauschwarzen Ödnis.
> Ein baum-
> hoher Gedanke
> greift sich den Lichtton: es sind
> noch Lieder zu singen jenseits
> der Menschen.[183]

It is therefore all the more surprising that his last three volumes of poetry, to be discussed in the next section, evince undercurrents of scepticism hitherto unequalled in his previous works.

5. Fadensonnen (1968), Lichtzwang (1970), Schneepart (1971): Poetry Led "ad absurdum."

In the last three volumes of Celan's poetry the trend which began in Atemwende towards more reduced condensed language with a minimum of coherent imagery is continued. In an even more cryptic and esoteric way than before most of the poems record their author's finest thoughts and sensory impressions regarding his visions of "das Andere" and the "Du" and his progress towards them. His poems are likened to messages in a bottle containing intimations of "das Eine Geheimnis" perceived in a realm of shadows which are cast adrift in the hope that their meaning will be ultimately deciphered:

> Weissgeräusche, gebündelt,
> Strahlen-
> gänge
> über den Tisch
> mit der Flaschenpost hin.[184]

The linguistic reduction may be regarded as a renewed attempt by Celan to eliminate the "Zuviel" of his language and to register his impressions in as concentrated a form and as iridescently as possible. In the words of one poem from Lichtzwang what he now offers are "Hörreste, Sehreste,"[185] poems whose meaning becomes apparent as much, if not more, in what is unsaid than what is said. This implies that only in silence can the truth of experience be conveyed.

In these last works, however, the tendency towards negative "Verstummen" becomes striking. This is evinced not only through declarations of failure and accompanying disintegration of style but also by means of absurd imagery, a fact which suggests that Celan is deriding and even parodying his own poetic endeavours. A brief analysis will elucidate the stages which lead to this phenomenon, even though in the actual works themselves there is no precise logical order of events: absurdity and seriousness are juxtaposed in haphazard fashion.

As he did in his previous work Celan continues in all earnestness to give cryptic utterance in certain metapoems as to the nature of his poetry and what it is trying to achieve. Thus, in the following lines from Lichtzwang, for example, he describes himself as a collector of "beacons," to be understood as signs or sources of light gathered from the night sphere, which are then to be conveyed by means of the poetic word:

> Baken-
> sammler, nächtlings,
> die Hucke voll,
> am Fingerende den Leitstrahl,
> für ihn, den einen an-
> fliegenden
> Wortstier.
>
> Baken-
> meister.[186]

Further to this he describes elsewhere his poetic activity as being a series of forays into the unknown. He struggles to obtain "die Spur eines Bisses im Nirgends,"[187] or "die Unze Wahrheit tief im Wahn."[188] His thoughts are "Schlafbrocken, Keile, / ins Nirgends getrieben,"[189] or "Pfeile," which accompany "das mitgeschossene Ziel / ins unbeirrbargeheime Gewühl."[190]

Poetic speech, metonymically referred to with the image of "Lippen," is regarded as a means of gaining access to the night sphere of the "Du," "Lippen, Schwellgewebe der Du-Nacht,"[191] and of articulating the realm of silence where the sister figure is felt to exist: "Schalltotes Schwestergehäus, / laß die Zwerglaute ein, / die ausgefragten."[192]

The language used to convey what is uncovered by the senses in "das Andere" is one which must not contain any concrete imagery:

> Aus dem Moorboden ins
> Ohnebild steigen,
> ein Häm
> im Flintenlauf Hoffnung,
> das Ziel, wie Ungeduld mündig,
> darin.[193]

It must not make "sense" in any accepted way, for what it is describing essentially lies beyond the bounds of calculated rationality:

> Seelenblind hinter den Aschen,
> im heilig-sinnlosen Wort,
> kommt der Entreimte geschritten,
> den Hirnmantel leicht um die Schultern[194]

For this reason Celan advises the reader not to endow his words with any traces of conventional meaning but to understand them as mimetic reflections of the dark inner regions, of the "blackness," they are exploring. Viewed in this way they will be able to open up new vistas of cognition:

> Kleide die Worthöhlen aus
> mit Pantherhäuten,
>
> erweitere sie, fellhin und fellher,
> sinnhin und sinnher,
>
> gib ihnen Vorhöfe, Kammern, Klappen
> und Wildnisse, parietal,
>
> und lausch ihrem zweiten
> und jeweils zweiten und zweiten
> Ton.[195]

All these highly complex poetological ideas are, of course, by now familiar to the reader of Celan's previous works. They are repeated here in order to illustrate the consistency of his thought. It is of interest to note, however, that in his last three volumes of lyric they are clothed in an often bewildering barrage of metaphors. Celan still seems to feel the need to explain, if not justify, what he is doing, yet his explanations become all the more concealed beneath the welter of his imagery. It is as if he is forcing the reader more than ever to search for clarity.

True to the poetological tenets as outlined above Celan continues in poem after poem to describe successful encounters with the "Du" and the impressions perceived in the cerebral sphere of "das Andere." In order to accomplish this he uses seemingly endless permutations of varying complexes of imagery which more often than not defy concrete definitive interpretation but rather are only accessible to an intuitive understanding. The poems resemble catalogues of inner visions and sensations whose strength lies in their hallucinatory vividness.

Despite the "darkness" of their language, however, it is Celan's declared intent to clear "Sichttunnels in den Sprachnebel."[196] Thus in the realm of "das Andere" he not only locates the "Du" but also an anonymous "Ziel,"[197] "Ewigkeit,"[198] "Liebe,"[199] "Wahrheit,"[200] "das Verwunschene,"[201] entirely new areas of reality and planes of time co-existing with, yet invisible to the mundane,[202] or else something so transparent that a language has not yet been found to express it:

> Fahlstimmig, aus
> der Tiefe geschunden:
> kein Wort, kein Ding,
> und beider einziger Name[203]

That which is by far and away most often perceived, however, is light--"das große Licht,""das verbotene Licht," "Lichtbänder," "Schimmer des Urlichts,"[204] occasionally connected with the light of the Divine: "Gottesbrände,"[205] "Still, in den Kranzarterien, / unumschnürt: / Ziw, jenes Licht."[206]

Coupled with those poems which proclaim successful insight, however, are others in which Celan displays the underlying conviction that his poetry is not making any progress towards its desired goal. In the midst of his often grotesque, cryptographic imagery there occur moments of startling clarity where he confronts himself with the truth of his situation:

Und Kraft und Schmerz
und was mich stieß
und trieb und hielt:

Hall-Schalt-
Jahre,

Fichtenrausch, einmal,

die wildernde Überzeugung,
daß dies anders zu sagen sei als
so.[207]

Here, Celan is facing the fact that his language, developed as a means with which to dissociate poetry from the language and perception of the everyday world in order to make it an effective instrument for the expression of more absolute experience, is inadequate. If this awareness has been the impetus to experiment anew, it has also confirmed the suspicion of the imminence of failure. The irrevocableness of this situation is summed up in the following lines:

Mit den Sackgassen sprechen
vom Gegenüber,
von seiner
expatriierten
Bedeutung -:

dieses
Brot kauen, mit
Schreibzähnen.[208]

Celan's recognition of the impossibility of ever achieving his poetological aims is present, as has been observed, in all stages of his artistic development. Each volume of poetry has recorded the problems of poetic language in the face of the higher reality which it strives to express, the goal of "Schweigen," and the possibility of articulating it, and the dangers of failure and "Verstummen." In the above-quoted poem he seems to have reached the same conclusion as Mallarmé who, in endeavouring to express the silence of the absolute, is reported to have said that his work, too, was a cul-de-sac.[209]

Finding himself in this dead-end situation, Celan does not, however, literally succumb to speechlessness. Instead, he begins to mock and parody his poetic efforts and make them appear absurd. Whilst not fully exploring this phenomenon, Klaus Voswinckel also detects in these later poems a "Ton des Selbstverlachens, der sprachlichen Clownerie und abschätzigen Rede," and a continual "Schwebe zwischen Ernst und Unernst."[210]

Celan's self-directed iconoclasm does not leave a stone unturned. He reduces every aspect of his poetic standpoint to objects of derision. To begin with, he lampoons the nature of his poetry, the principles which lie behind it, and also his own orphic gifts. One poem from the collection Fadensonnen, for example, depicts in an absurd and totally incoherent fashion a series of impressions which are meant to represent that which is perceived in the poetic "Innenraum" and also the actual process of perceiving, a poetic situation typical for Celan:

> Gewieherte Tumbagebete,
>
> Bluthufe scharren
> die Denksträuße zusammen,

ein Aschen-Juchhe
blättert die Singstimmen um,
hängt die zerstrahlten Topase
hoch in den Raum,

die gewitterpflichtigen
Leichensäcke
richten sich aus,

im Trauerkondukt
grinst unwiderstehlich
das Königreich
Bemen.[211]

The first two words of the poem seem to describe what is to follow: the next verses are to be regarded as "gewieherte Tumbagebete." The connection between Celan's own "unbebilderte Sprache" and "Gewieher" has already been referred to. The seemingly empty word "tumba" is Middle High German for "Nichts" or "Stummheit." Thus, Celan is implying that not just this one poem but all poems of this type, and there are very many of them in his later works, are either about nothing at all or else they have come into being as a result of his own speechlessness. Indeed, these two implications may well overlap, meaning that such poems are about "Nichts" because of their author's own "Stummheit." Whichever the case may be, "Tumbagebete" is for modern sensibilities a nonsense word and, Celan would have us believe, a fitting designation for most of the poetry he is now writing.[212]

Not merely content with scoffing at his own poetry Celan also derides in the following thumbnail self-portrait his attempts to articulate the night realm and the stumbling and stammering which it eventually causes:

Zur Nachtordnung Über-
gerittener, Über-
geschlitterter, Über-
gewitteter,

Un-
besungener, Un-
bezwungener, Un-
umwundener, vor
die Irrenzelte gepflanzter

seelenbärtiger, hagel-
äugiger Weißkies-
stotterer.[213]

In connection with this he begins to ridicule the process for preparing himself for his inner journeys as well as the sensory organs necessary for perceiving that which exists there. Thus, the act of fathoming the innermost recesses of the cerebral "Innenraum" is callously referred to as a spooning out of nerve cells: "Komm, wir löffeln / Nervenzellen // . . . . . // Zehn Fasern ziehn / aus den noch erreichbaren Zentren / Halberkennbares nach."[214]

Auricular perception of the realm of silence is seen to be accomplished by some kind of unusual hearing aid, knowledge of which is granted to only a few initiates:

Das Im-Ohrgerät treibt eine Blüte,
du bist ihr Jahr, dich beredet
die Welt ohne Zunge,
das weiß
jeder sechste.[215]

The "poetic eye," always regarded in earlier poetry as an important instrument for observing "das Andere" and the "Du" fares no better. In the following lines Celan infers that his mental journeys have turned into complete drudgery but nevertheless his eye will not leave him in peace. Independent of its owner, it seems eager to carry on:

Holzgesichtiger,
schlackermäuliger
Narr überm Tretrad:

am Ohrlappen hängt
dir das Aug
und hüpft
begrünt.[216]

Finally, Celan even jeers at his lack of ability not only to understand the world around him but also its deeper, "eternal" significance. In "Möwenküken" he offers the following scornful self-assessment:

Freund,
teerübergroßner Sackhüpfer du,
auch hier, auf diesem
Gestade gerätst du
beiden, Zeit und Ewigkeit, in die
falsche
Kehle.[217]

From the above selection, therefore, it can be seen that through the use of a type of humour that has bitter overtones Celan has completely undermined the foundations of his poetic position. His endeavours to expand the limits of human experience and language and the means used to carry this through are put into an absurd light. Even the admission of failure is treated with comic exasperation.

This whole situation is not just left at that, however. Adding insult to injury Celan procedes to debunk and parody the serious intent of those of his poems whose task it is to describe and bring about an encounter with a "Du" and plumb the depths of "das Andere." In the poem "Spasmen," for example, the theme of gaining contact with the "Du" is described with bold erotic imagery which, depending on the viewpoint of the reader, belongs to some of the most humorous or tasteless writing in modern German literature. Here, the poem is presented as a phallus and it is not left to the imagination as to what aspect of the "Du" it is exploring:

Spasmen, ich liebe dich, Psalmen,

die Fühlwände tief in der Du-Schlucht
frohlocken, Samenbemalte,

Ewig, verunewigt bist du,
verewigt, Unewig, du,

hei,

in dich, in dich
sing ich die Knochenstabritzung,

Rotrot, weit hinterm Schamhaar
geharft, in den Höhlen,

draußen, rundum
der unendliche Keinerlei-Kanon,

du wirfst mir den neunmal
geschlungenen triefenden
Grandelkranz zu.[218]

That the "Du" finds this arrangement wholly satisfactory becomes apparent at the end of the poem "Haut Mal," which, far from apostrophising the subject of its attentions in tones of earnest reverence, as is normally the case with Celan's "Du" poems, paints a completely repulsive picture:

Unentsühnte,
Schlafsüchtige,
von den Göttern Befleckte:

deine Zunge ist rußig,
dein Harn schwarz,
wassergallig dein Stuhl,

du führst,
wie ich,
unzüchtige Reden,

du setzt einen Fuß vor den andern,
legst eine Hand auf die andre,
schmiegst dich in Ziegenfell,

du beheiligst
mein Glied.[219]

In the above poems Celan's "Du" figure becomes completely debased. Instead of being endowed with the usual sublime mystical qualities it has become an object of scorn and even ridicule. This trend is present in much of Celan's later poetry. The "Du" is apostrophised as a "Verworfene, not- / freundliche, / kunkelbeinige Göttin,"[220] who, "im Rupfengewand," knits "am Geheimnisstrumpf."[221] Its mode of communication with the "Ich" in the midst of the latter's "dich Schatten beschwerenden Rede" is reminiscent of that of Kafka's Josephine, die Sängerin: "Mit der Stimme der Feldmaus / quiekst du herauf."[222] On one occasion union between the "Ich" and the "Du" is described not as taking place in the exalted night region but in garbage:

Tau. Und ich lag mit dir, du, im Gemülle,
ein matschiger Mond
bewarf uns mit Antwort,

wir bröckelten auseinander
und bröselten wieder in eins[223]

Frequently this union has salacious overtones:

> Du, in den mit-
> verschworenen Wildbächen Auf-
> geschlüsselte, die
> hüpfenden Brüste im scharfen
> Versspangen-Joch,
> stürzt mit mir durch
> Bilder, Felsen, Zahlen.[224]
>
> Krümelgeister
> kalben
> aus deinen gläsernen
> Titten[225]
>
> Unbedeckte, Ganz und gar
> Brüstende du.
>
> . . . .
>
> Der Steinmützenkönig vorn
> stürzt von der Steineselkruppe,
> die Hände klamm
> vorm tittenbeschrieenen
> Antlitz.[226]

Finally, the light which they both perceive no longer seems to have any mystical connotations but is likened to excrement:

> In Echsen-
> Häute, Fall-
> süchtige,
> bett ich dich, auf den Simsen,
>
> die Giebel-
> löcher
> schütten uns zu, mit Lichtdung.[227]

Contiguous to these humorous portrayals of encounters with the "Du" are also poems in which Celan deflates the earnestness of his depictions of "das Andere." Of importance in this respect is the motif of play where Celan hints that his descriptions of the cerebral "Innenraum" are to be regarded as a kind of game and as such are no longer to be taken seriously.

The poem "In die Nacht gegangen," for example, describes in its first stanza transcendence into the night sphere and the intention to search for light there. In the second stanza it is mischievously suggested that, in addition, this area of experience offers scope for new, quite frivolous escapades which stand somewhat in contrast to the serious nature of the "journeys" which had hitherto been made into it:

> In die Nacht gegangen, helferisch,
> ein stern-
> durchlässiges Blatt
> statt des Mundes:
>
> es bleibt
> noch etwas wild zu vertun,
> bäumlings.[228]

The impression that "das Andere" presents opportunities more for flights of whimsical fancy than urgent exploration is enhanced in the following lines:

> Playtime: die Fenster, auch sie
> lesen dir alles Geheime
> heraus aus den Wirbeln
> und spiegelns
> ins gallertäugige Drüben.[229]

Perception of "das Geheime" and its manifestations forms the subject matter of the poem from which the above is excerpted. The procedure of perceiving and the poetic description of it, however, is forced into an entirely new light by the first word. What Celan is implying here is that his lyrical depictions of the "other" realm are no longer a serious undertaking but an act of play, a kind of rather empty joke.

Having reached this conclusion, a number of his poems depict the sphere of "das Andere" as a bizarre playground, and that which is perceived there as possessing the characteristics of a deranged circus performance. The following quotations will illustrate this:

> In den Geräuschen, wie unser Anfang,
> in der Schlucht,
> wo du mir zufielst,
> zieh ich sie wieder auf, die
> Spieldose - du
> weißt: die unsichtbare,
> die unhörbare.[230]
>
> Ungepflückt die großen
> Spielzeug-
> welten. Keinerlei Dienst
> am Gestirn.
>
> In den Kontrolltürmern hämmern
> die hundert silbernen Hufe
> das verbotene
> Licht frei.[231]
>
> Die teuflischen
> Zungenspäße der Nacht
> verholzen in deinem Ohr[232]
>
> und das Gehörlose an dir,
> drüben, beim Schläfenfirn,
> blüht sich jetzt aus, mit Narren-
> schellen an jedem
> Kelchblatt.[233]
>
> Allmählich clowngesichtig,
> nichtsgespiegelt,
> die Schminke Wahrheit blaugefrorn
> im Winkelmund[234]

For the most part, however, the aspect of play with regard to Celan's poetic visions is not merely alluded to in the abstract, but rather it comes to light through the forceful absurdity of the imagery used to describe them. As was shown, Celan began to display a facetious attitude towards his poetological intentions in Die Niemandsrose. In his last three volumes of lyric he plays with language as never before.

Whilst it is impossible to find examples that are wholly representative of this trend the following brief quotations will give some insight as to the extent to which the later visions of "das Andere" are dominated by elements of the absurd:

> wir stehn hier
> im Geruch
> der Heiligkeit, ja.
>
> Brenzlige
> Jenseitsschwaden
> treten uns dick aus den Poren,
>
> in jeder zweiten
> Zahn-
> karies erwacht
> eine unverwüstliche Hymne.
>
> Den Batzen Zwielicht, den du uns reinwarfst,
> komm, schluck ihn mit runter.[235]

> Die Ewigkeit hält sich in Grenzen:
> leicht, in ihren
> gewaltigen Meß-Tentakeln,
> bedachtsam,
> rotiert die von Finger-
> nägeln durchleuchtbare
> Blutzucker-Erbse.[236]
>
> Hinter frostgebänderten Käfern
> ballert das fahrende
> Leuchtglück,

eine hilflose
Bauchfratze, Freund,
schläfert dich
ein.[237]

The abundant use of absurd and grotesque imagery and the tendency towards self-mockery and even self-parody mark the final stage in Celan's development as a poet. As was also to a certain extent the case with Günter Eich, it begins as one symptom of poetological defeat and speechlessness and then finally turns into the prime manifestation of the disease itself.

Although in his last three volumes of poetry Celan continues to perpetrate his fundamental poetological principles, consciousness of their ultimate non-feasibility becomes apparent more than ever before. His striving to dislodge language from its accepted empirical base in order that it be vested with new powers for the expression of other areas of experience was felt to be leading nowhere. It was an absurd, illogical undertaking.

As a result of this knowledge Celan came to regard his language as a dead end: instead of breaking through the barriers of cognition it merely seemed to confirm the impenetrability of those barriers. Driven into a corner, as it were, he does not literally fall speechless and renounce the writing of poetry but rather he documents again and again the absurdity of his situation. In the years just prior to his suicide Celan was more prolific than at any other period of his life. Like someone caught in a treadmill--"schlackermäuliger Narr überm Tretrad"!--the faster, more frantically the wheel is turned the greater the awareness grows of the futility of the whole exercise. Celan's final poems do not seem to open up new vistas of understanding but are rather carbon copies of themselves, testifying to the "Sackgasse" they have reached.

Celan's greatness as a poet does not lie so much in the aesthetically satisfying qualities of his work--many have found his verbal contortions insufferable--but in its intent. In Der Meridian he offered what he considered to be a paradigm of the major trends in modern poetry. Established literary conventions were felt to be jaded and the historical world inhumane and absurd, a situation which could only deaden the innovative artistic sensibility and lead to possible "Verstummen." It becomes the task of poetry to react against this and, as "Gegenwort," reveal the latency of other, more absolute aspects of existence hitherto unrecognised or forgotten which have their being in an "unheimlichen Bereich." Exploration of this sphere creates new freedom and the possibility of perceiving "das ganz Andere." As an "Atemwende" the language of poetry must again overcome the threat of speechlessness when faced with the new reality and delve deeper into this absolute realm.

But there are limits to this undertaking. It is inconceivable that language itself can be made absolute. Nevertheless, the modern poem still entertains the "unerhörten Anspruch" to achieve this state. Faced with a utopian goal and the knowledge that it can never be fulfilled it still presses forward. The most that it can do, however, to divorce its imagery from normal semantic connotations is to lead it "ad absurdum," in the hope that out of the resulting meaninglessness new meaning will emerge.

Although it would be procrustean to insist that Celan's poetry in its entirety follows the order of the above pattern exactly, it is clear that with a tenacity that can only be considered remarkable his work was intended to reproduce it in its broadest outline. His lyric aims to represent the basic structures and development of modern poetry as a whole with all their ramifications including the pitfall of "Verstummen." In the final instance, however, he goes one step further: he shows that the leading of poetry to the point of absurdity is in itself absurd. It merely leads to an artistic stalemate and thus, once again, to the verge of speechlessness.

It was Celan himself in Der Meridian who offered perhaps the most expedient assessment of this entire situation: "Die Dichtung, meine Damen und Herren-: diese Unendlichsprechung von lauter Sterblichkeit und Umsonst!" This may also be considered a fitting epitaph for his own work.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

> Die tiefste Qual wie der
> höchste Aufschwung sind
> stumm.
> (Karl Wolfskehl)[1]
>
> Ich habe keine Worte, nur
> lallen. Lallen! Ich lall
> das Weltall an und das Weltall
> lallt.
> (August Stramm)[2]

Having in the preceding chapters examined individually the poetological goals of the poets under discussion and the incidence of "speechlessness" in their works, this final section now affords an opportunity to summarise what has hitherto been ascertained and thus establish whether or not the poetry of these authors, despite the outward dissimilarities both in content and form, follows certain mutual trends and encounters similar problems. Once this general perspective has been gained it should then be possible to determine if their work is in some way representative of wider trends which are apparent in the modern period as a whole, or if it should in the final reckoning be regarded merely as a post Second World War phenomenon.

In order to carry out the initial objective, the work of the first poet dealt with in this study will be used as a basis and then that of the other three will be surveyed.

For Marie Luise Kaschnitz poetry was a "moralische Anstalt" which took upon itself the task of revealing the essential good in the world and thus the possibility of providing hope at a time when it seemed to have all but completely disappeared. She was of the belief that existence conforms to a universal pattern of "Werden" and "Vergehen" and, with an attitude which would have perhaps been better suited to the "Goethezeit," endeavoured to prove that the former with all the positive aspects it represents can never be entirely vanquished.

The bitter reality of the post-war period, however, almost proved too much for Kaschnitz' somewhat naive idealism. She is eventually forced to admit that she can no longer understand reality and, as a result, her conviction concerning the presence of some kind of universal harmony becomes severely shaken.

Although she never completely renounces her attempts to supply notes of consolation, her poetry begins in ever-increasing measure to concentrate upon the negative aspects of the contemporary world with its absence of compassion, incoherence and moral decay. A state of impending speechlessness, signalled stylistically by the onset of reduced paratactical, faltering language, and thematically by increasing poetological scepticism, occurs after Kaschnitz reaches the conclusion that because of the chaos and unintelligibility of the world it would be self-deceit to believe that poetry can present this as part of a balanced pattern in which good will eventually triumph over evil. In this way, her lyric almost falls prey to that "Schweigen der Entmenschlichung" which in one of her early theoretical writings she claimed it was the task of all poetry to overcome.[3]

Much of the lyric of Günter Eich also confronts itself with problems inherent in the reality of the concrete, man-made world. Whereas his earlier immature poems evoke a general atmosphere of existential "Weltschmerz," his later work concentrates more and more on the specific reality of the post-war world. He uses his poetry as a vehicle for levelling sharp attacks against the lack of humanity which has impregnated modern society, the callousness of those in authority with their desire to subjugate all vestiges of individual freedom, and the complacency of the masses with their blind acceptance of the prevailing moral and political status quo. The whole human race, he would have us believe, is heading towards inescapable doom.

As a consequence of this bleak outlook, Eich postulates that it would be better for him to withdraw from the world as there is nothing which can be done to change it. This act, when understood as a statement of poetological intent, is tantamount to an admission of defeat: retreat from the poetic task can only lead to "Verstummen."

Eich endeavours, however, to turn the position of impending failure into which he has been forced into one which will convey even more aggressively than before an attitude of damning disapprobation against the state of affairs in the world at large. Instead of openly articulating direct criticism, therefore, he attempts to foster a stance of non-compliance by withdrawing his poetry into its own hermetic world, and thereby to demonstrate that it is indeed possible for the individual to make a stand against the all-encroaching "verwaltete Welt." In this way, possible defeat is supposed to transform itself resiliently into a gesture of defiance.

Despite the initial tenacity of this resolve, however, Eich soon becomes aware that his new hermetic style with its deliberately extreme linguistic reduction to the point of absurd vacuousness can serve no purpose. It has no possibilities whatsoever for further development, but rather evaporates once more into speechlessness. The recognition of this stalemate finally causes Eich to produce poems in which he ridicules both his latest poetic standpoint and also conveys with poignant finality an attitude of tired resignation. In the final instance, therefore, Eich's poetry comes to grief, as did that of Kaschnitz, as a result of its failure to come to terms with modern social and political reality. In both these cases, the poetic word is eventually regarded as a wholly ineffectual means of altering the course of, or providing hope in what is seen to be the degeneracy of contemporary existence.

The relationship of poetry to the reality of the historical world is also prominently featured either in the actual works themselves or in the theoretical writings of both Nelly Sachs and Paul Celan. For Sachs, the present age is one of barbarism, a "Nachtalter," in which acts of needless cruelty are perpetually committed. As was shown, often when her poetry tries to articulate this situation, it falls helplessly speechless. It disintegrates into a series of staccato-like, fragmented utterances which are in themselves a forceful documentation of poetic defeat. In addition to this, Sachs promulgates the idea that as a result of the decay of ethical and religious beliefs in modern society, language, which for her was a sacred instrument for the revelation of the absolute, divine meaning of life, has become perverted to such a degree that it is no longer capable of fulfilling its original sublime role. Thus she feels that historical reality has literally robbed her of her speech, and, indeed, in one sense her poetry may be regarded as a struggle to overcome the state of speechlessness to which she felt subjected.

Finally, Paul Celan was aware from the very outset that direct confrontation between the poetic word and the present age, itself called a "Wortnacht," could only lead to "Verstummen." Thus, in his poetry, although frequent reference is made to events and situations in the historical world, the latter does not form the major topic of his work. It was, after all, his main goal to create an awareness of completely new areas of reality whose existence lay on the other side of the merely empirical.

At this juncture, therefore, it has become clear that as far as Kaschnitz, Eich and Sachs are concerned, an important reason for the phenomenon of speechlessness in their poetry is the inability of the poetic word to make a stand against the arbitrary inhumanity and chaos of modern existence. In the case of Celan, of course, the danger does not arise in his work for the same reasons as a consequence of his initial awareness of the insuperable problems connected with the poetic description of the world after Ausschwitz. In one way or another, however, all these poets have reached the same basic conclusion, namely, that the disintegration of every semblance of order in contemporary reality can lead eventually to the disintegration of poetry and thus to the state of artistic speechlessness.

It goes without saying that this scepticism as to the ability of language to meet the difficult challenge of articulating the confusion caused by the total breakdown of moral and social values in the world is by no means limited to the works of Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan. To the contrary, it has constituted a major preoccupation in the literature and "Sprachphilosophie" not just of twentieth century Germany but of Europe as a whole. In the words of Theodore Ziolkowski:

> Die Dichtung des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts zeichnet sich durch eine merkwürdige und paradoxe Erscheinung aus: die totale Entwertung des Wortes im Auge des Dichters, der an die Fähigkeit des Wortes, Erkenntnis zu übermitteln, nicht mehr glauben kann. Es handelt sich um die viel diskutierte Sprachkrise der Moderne, die zumal in Deutschland häufig der Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher Betrachtung geworden ist.[4]

A detailed analysis of this phenomenon as it is evinced in twentieth century writings would not only overstep the bounds of this study but would also be superfluous since, as

Ziolkowski indicates, it has been dealt with with great frequency by many literary historians. It will be sufficient merely to mention that the names most often connected with the so-called "Sprachkrise" of the modern period include Nietzsche, Maeterlinck, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, George, Musil, Mauthner, Kafka, Thomas Mann, Sartre, Joyce, Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov, T.S. Eliot, Gottfried Benn, and other minor figures such as Dehmel, Weinheber and Otto zur Linde.[5]

Indeed, as Helmut Prang points out, mistrust as to the ability of language to give expression to the complexities of reality is a phenomenon not just peculiar to the first half of the twentieth century but one which also appears with some regularity from the eighteenth century on. To prove this point, he refers to selected passages from the works of Lichtenberg, Hölderlin, Schiller, Tieck, Kleist, Raabe and even Goethe.[6]

The collection of essays _Sprachnot und Wirklichkeitszerfall dargestellt an Beispielen neuerer Literatur_, edited by E. Meier[7] and Wilhelm Höck's _Formen heutiger Lyrik. Verse am Rande des Verstummens_[8] also show that the phenomenon in hand continues to be a problem right up to the present day and is evinced in the works of such writers and poets as Ödon von Horvath, Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, Ingeborg Bachmann, Johannes Bobrowski, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Helmut Heißenbüttel and Peter Rühmkorf, amongst many others.

The above list is by no means complete and could be continued at some length. It does, however, serve to give an idea of how widespread that gulf between language and reality has become for many of those whose task it is to use the one as an instrument for the portrayal of the other. Indeed, the impression can be gained that there is hardly a modern major literary figure who either theoretically or artistically has not at some stage of his development confronted the problem of the insufficiency of language when it endeavours to encompass the reality of the external world.

It is of interest to note that, in the twentieth century at least, this problem seems to become particularly acute during times of greatest social and political upheaval such as war. This fact is quite logical, for it is in such periods that any order that might have been felt to be apparent in human existence all but disappears and belief in the ethical and religious foundations of civilisation becomes shattered more than ever. In such a situation literature can become endangered because those who through the medium of the written word might otherwise have wished to champion the positive ideals of existence or else to seek and reveal what can only be tritely called the "meaning of life" are forced either to question the validity of their endeavours, or merely to stammer out the senselessness they perceive, or even, in extreme cases, to fall silent.

Thus, for example, the verbal absurdities in the "Klanggedichte" of Christian Morgenstern or of Hans Arp, a major exponent of Dadaism, a movement which had its origins during the First World War and which was conceived in part as a radical reaction against the meaninglessness of the current political situation, are justifiably called by W. Höck a "Verlautbarung des Verstummens."[9] That is to say, their nonsensical stammering effect conveys the speechlessness experienced when faced with the amorphous nature of existence. Indeed, they directly mirror the vacuousness of the chaos itself, which is felt to deny articulation by means of coherent speech.

The verbal pyrotechnics of much of the poetry of German Expressionism, another literary movement which reached a peak during the Great War, may also be understood as a reflection of the extreme difficulties encountered in the portrayal of contemporary reality and in the attempt to point the way to the possibility of a better world.[10]

Certain other major writers, the final stages of whose development border on the contemporary period, were also profoundly affected by the inhumanity of the Second World War, and fully comprehended the jeopardy into which art had been placed as a consequence of it. Hermann Broch who, in his Joyce essay of 1936 had already warned of the perils of "Ausdrucksunfähigkeit" and "Stummheit" as a result of the general "Wertzerfall," and the resulting tension experienced by artists of, on the one hand, a tenacious "Gestaltungswille" which was tempered, on the other, by an opposing desire for "Gestaltungsvernichtung,"[11] is a case in point. As George Steiner writes, the theme of Broch's art was the "incompatibility between eloquence, the poet's primary delight in speech, and the inhuman nature of political reality."[12] He describes how Broch's most important novel Der Tod des Vergil (1945) "is the specific treatment of the tragic condition of a man of words in an age of brute power," and how its main character realises that "the beauty and truth of language are inadequate to cope with human suffering and the advance of barbarism."[13] Thus, with Broch the very existence of art in the modern age in its accepted forms is put into question because of the excesses of contemporary reality.

Wolfgang Borchert was also acutely aware of the problems of articulating the inhumanity of the present-day world. As Karlheinz Daniels explains, the young writer "erfährt das Versagen des Wortes vor der unfaßbaren Grauenhaftigkeit des Krieges, vor der das Tun des Dichters zum Geschwätz wird."[14] In the eyes of Borchert the only way out of this dilemma would be for the poet deliberately to fall silent, an act which in one way may be construed, as Daniels points out, as an "Eingeständnis der Sinnlosigkeit angesichts des Unsagbaren,"[15] whereas in another, it is to be considered as a tenacious deed of defiant heroism, an attitude which has much in common with Kaschnitz' call in the poem "Schluß" for the poet to fall silent,[16] and with Günter Eich's gesture of withdrawal. In the words of Borchert:

> Hingehen sollen die heroisch verstummten einsamen Dichter und lernen, wie man einen Schuh macht, einen Fisch fängt und ein Dach dichtet, denn ihr ganzes Getu ist Geschwätz, qualvoll, blutig, verzweifelt, ist Geschwätz . . . vor den wahren Vokabeln der Welt. Denn wer unter uns, wer denn, ach, wer weiß einen Reim auf einen Hinrichtungsschrei, wer

> kennt das Versmaß für das Gebell der Maschinengewehre, eine Vokabel für den frisch verstummten Schrei eines toten Pferdeauges, in dem sich kein Himmel mehr spiegelt und nicht mal die brennenden Dörfer, welche Druckerei hat ein Zeichen für das Rostrot der Güterwagen, dieses Weltbrandrot, dieses angetrocknete blutigverkrustigte Rot auf weißer menschlicher Haut? Geht nach Haus, Dichter, geht in die Wälder, fangt Fische, schlagt Holz und tut eure heroische Tat: Verschweigt![17]

It was, however, Karl Kraus who drew the most extreme consequence from this situation. Just as Hofmannsthal had earlier declared in his "Chandos" letter his intention to abandon the writing of poetry because of the impossibility of trying to place some kind of order on the disparateness of external reality as a whole by means of the cohesive powers of language, so did Kraus write a "Letztes Gedicht" in 1933. He was of the opinion that it would be wholly impracticable to describe the new reality which was about to be imposed on civilisation by the Nazi regime, and the almost nonchalant tone of the reason which he gave for renouncing poetry--"Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein"[18]--does not detract from the gravity or finality of his decision.

Thus, the lack of faith in artistic language to verbalise the essence of empirical reality and the resulting trend towards speechlessness which is apparent in either the poetry or theoretical writings of Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan are not phenomena which only they have in common, but are facets of a much wider trend, one which unites their work with the mainstream of modern literature and thought as a whole.

The reasons for poetic failure and possible speechlessness in the lyric of these poets do not only have their origins in a mistrust of language as a means of describing aspects of concrete empirical reality. As has been seen, each of them to a greater or lesser extent attempts to escape the confines of the mundane world and, by way of contrast, to show the presence of and give expression to more absolute spheres of existence. This venture also leads to "Verstummen."

This more "metaphysical" aspect is not very pronounced in the poetry of Kaschnitz which, for the most part, does not leave the limits of the easily recognisable contemporary world. Only on one occasion, in the poem "Jenseits" from the collection Ein Wort weiter,[19] does she try to transcend the latter, but then only as a kind of half-hearted joke. She is eventually forced to admit that because of the inadequacy of language and the human faculties of perception it is not feasible to reveal that which lies in the "Beyond," and the cycle ends with a gesture of speechlessness as an inevitable consequence.

The poetry of Günter Eich also encounters this problem. A major preoccupation of his work was the revelation of higher forms of reality, but he, too, was forced to admit that this is an impossible task and he even comes to doubt their very existence. Before finally renouncing this area of his subject matter he begins to mock and parody it in a highly sardonic and self-effacing manner, thus confirming the hopelessness and absurdity of the entire undertaking.

For Nelly Sachs and Paul Celan the poetic exploration of the "other" reality becomes the focal point of their artistic intentions. It was conceived as a realm of silence, a plane of reality which human language had hitherto never penetrated, and they constantly endeavoured to develop modes of expression which would encompass this "Schweigen."

The concept of the "Absolute" as being a dimension of silence, to which the human mind must gain access if the mysteries of life are to be comprehended, has a very long tradition both in philosophy and literature. George Steiner, for example, draws attention to the fact that both in Oriental metaphysics such as Buddhism and Taoism and in the philosophy of the Trappists and St. John of the Cross the domain of truth lies in silence,[20] an idea which, as G.L. Bruns points out, was also shared by Plato.[21] This notion was continued by such medieval philosophers as Meister Eckehard[22] and also plays an important role in the ideas of such modern-day thinkers as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Buber, Max Picard and Karl Jaspers.[23]

The ontological significance of silence as manifested in works of literature and the idea that it is the task of language to give intimations of this unknown sphere and even articulate its mysteries becomes a frequent theme from the nineteenth century onwards. As H. Prang indicates, it is to be found in the poetry of Hölderlin, for example.[24] Walter Höllerer in his Theorie der modernen Lyrik. Dokumente zur Poetik quotes a passage by Rimbaud in which the French poet describes how he has striven to express silence by means of the written word,[25] and Hugo Friedrich traces and analyses this poetic endeavour in the work of Mallarmé, Jiménez, Ungaretti, Valéry and even Hilde Domin.[26] Heinz Politzer also discerns a movement towards the goal of silence in a wide variety of modern poets and authors. He writes:

> Moderne Autoren haben uns gelehrt, nicht nur ihren Worten Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken, sondern auch dem Schweigen, das sie brechen, wenn sie schreiben. Rilke und Yeats, Kafka und Joyce, Beckett und Ionesco erinnern uns daran, daß in wechselndem Ausmaß und aus vielerlei Gründen Schweigen zu der Botschaft geworden ist, das ihr Wort verkündet.[27]

The list of those who at some stage of their artistic development have either expressed the wish to delve more deeply into the realm of "Schweigen," or have actually attempted to carry this out, could be greatly augmented. Paul Böckmann, for example, refers to this tendency in the poetry of Georg Trakl,[28] Idris Parry in G.M. Hopkins,[29] L. Huber in Robert Musil,[30] and K. Daniels in Gerhard Hauptmann, Christian Morgenstern, Peter Gan and Max Frisch, amongst many others.[31] B. Angst-Hürlimann illustrates in detail the motif of transversing the "Sprachgrenze" in the works of Ingeborg Bachmann.[32]

The fascination of the modern poet for silence also forms the topic of such detailed studies as Susan Sontag's "The aesthetics of silence,"[33] Jerzy Peterkiewicz' The other side of silence: the poet at the limits of language,[34] and Claudio Guillén's "Stylistics of Silence."[35]

It was this desire to leave words behind and advocate instead the contemplation of silence that prompted H. Prang to remark:

> Welch eigentümliches Phaenomen, daß gerade die begnadesten Dichter z.gr.T. so mißtrauisch gegen den Gebrauch der Sprache sind, die Worte im Grunde für unzulänglich halten und sich für die Stille oder das Schweigen erklären![36]

From the above, therefore, it is clear that the encounters of Sachs and Celan with silence are not as novel as might be expected but rather belong to a well-established philosophical and literary trend. However, with the possible exceptions of Rimbaud, Mallarmé and the later Rilke, they strove with a greater tenacity than any other in the modern period to gain ground in this obscure dimension.

Despite Nelly Sachs' firm resolve to execute her poetic task of making tangible the secrets of the "Schweigereich" and her refusal in the final instance to admit defeat, her poetry is plagued with doubt as to its capacity to ever achieve its desired aims. She is forced to declare her own lack of perception of the "invisible universe" and becomes sceptical of the power of language to accomplish its goal. These more negative aspects eventually result in the fragmentation of her poetry to such a degree that it hovers on the verge of speechlessness. As was also the case with Celan, this problem is compounded by the fact that even when language comes closest to articulating silence, it reaches a point where it almost evaporates into total meaninglessness, giving rise once more to a negative impression of muteness.

Similar difficulties are experienced by the poetry of Paul Celan in its quest for a word "nach dem Bilde des Schweigens." It constantly documents its own defeat and stylistically often reaches the point of its own disintegration. The endstage of Celan's lyric, however, is not reached with a state of total speechlessness but by the fact that it turns against itself, as it were, and, by means of derogatory humour, gives rise to the suspicion that it has merely constituted an exercise in the futile and the absurd.

The failure of language to explore adequately "metaphysical" or "transcendental" aspects of existence in the search for "absolute" expression of the "Absolute" is once again a common phenomenon in philosophy and literature. As Josef Quint indicates, it is as old as mysticism itself: "Alle Mystiker stimmen darin überein, daß sie ihre mystische Erfahrung, ihr Erlebnis, ihre innere Schau in der Sprache nicht zu übermitteln, nicht zur adäquaten Aussage zu bringen vermögen und daß sie dieses Unvermögens leidvollst bewußt werden."37 Indeed, as has been seen, Celan in Der Meridian suggests that it is a major cause for the "Neigung zum Verstummen" in much of modern poetry. Bodo Müller in his article "Verlust der Sprache. Zur linguistischen Krise in der Literatur" lists some of the more important literary figures who have artistically confronted this problem, who were aware of the impossibility of its ever being solved, and whose work in certain cases approached or even reached the state of speechlessness as a result. These include Dante, Hölderlin, Lamartine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and Jiménez.[38] Werner Günther and Joachim W. Storck both make reference to the stammering, stuttering effect and the tendency towards "Verstummen" in Rilke's later poetry[39] and Ludwig Büttner speaks of the lack of sense in the work of such surrealist poets as Yvan Goll, Ernst Meister and Stephan Hermlin amongst others, a fact which in itself can be an indication of impending speechlessness. He writes:

> Nicht selten gehen die surrealistischen Lyriker von der verschwenderischen Üppigkeit zur Reduktion und Abstraktion über. Sie suchen nun das Seiende in knapper, einfachster Weise auszudrücken. Sie bewegen sich auf das Schweigen hin und werden nahezu kommunikationslos. Die radikale Reduzierung führt zu einem öden Skelettismus.[40]

As becomes apparent from the above, therefore, the metaphysical or ontological aims of the poetry of Eich, Sachs, Celan, and, to a lesser degree, of that of Kaschnitz, and their eventual lack of success, which directly leads to a situation bordering on artistic "Verstummen," evince affinities between their work and other significant literary undertakings. Thus, in this way also, their poetry can be seen to participate in another important trend inherent in the literature of the "Moderne." They are by no means alone in their ultimate failure to sever completely the bonds language has with ordinary reality.

At this stage it can now be discerned that, taken as a whole, a definite pattern has emerged through the lyric of the four poets in question concerning its relationship _vis-à-vis_ those segments of reality which it seeks to express.

Attempts made to compass the nature of empirical political or social reality or else to voice criticism against it result in "Verstummen." Faced with this dead-end situation, poetry then strives to destroy the merely empirical perspective in order to make manifest the presence of other more absolute dimensions of experience and delve deeper into their elusive essence. The basis of such an enterprise may be understood as the desire to prove that mundane reality with all its tribulations and injustices is merely relative: it is not the only aspect of existence which can be encountered. This venture, too, leads to "Verstummen," for the poetic mind has neither the linguistic nor the sensory capacities necessary to carry this out successfully. Where the Absolute is thought to be a sphere of silence then the conclusion is reached that it can only be expressed by silence, a fact which obviously also gives the death blow to poetic speech.

Thus, the lyric of Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan is, in varying measure, enmeshed in a dilemma from which there appears to be no egress and which eventually causes the possibility of speechlessness to arise. It finds itself on the brink of failure no matter which facet of reality it is faced with, caught up between two worlds and denied complete access to either of them.

It will be remembered that Celan in his Bremer Preisrede and in Der Meridian also delineates this syndrome of "Verstummen" both before empirical as well as "other" areas of reality, and points to the fact that it is representative of trends inherent in the development of modern poetry. Marianne Kesting in her book Vermessung des Labyrinths. Studien zur modernen Ästhetik[41] comes to a similar conclusion with regard to modern literature as a whole. She explains that in the modern period "Dichtung" has had the tendency to become "sprachlos" when faced with a factual world which is both "chaotisch und unverständlich."[42] As a result, it tends to leave this world behind because of the "Wortunfähigkeit" experienced when dealing with it, and to turn instead to "ihren eigenen Bereich, den inneren des Individuums,"[43] one which was felt to represent "die wahre Welt" where the truth or essence of existence could be best perceived. She states that out of the original speechlessness caused by the intangibility of empirical reality, therefore, new possibilities for literature arise: exploration of the newly discovered inner world offers limitless scope for the poetic imagination.

As Kesting is quick to point out, however, there is a negative side to this other reality in that it is as equally unintelligible as its counterpart, the real world: "Mit der Entwertung und Entleerung der Außenwelt verbirgt sich die Essenz auch innerhalb der Innenwelt der dichterischen Sprache," and she continues, "Die Sprache der Dichtung hat sich also auf die Suche nach etwas begeben, das verdunkelt bleibt und nicht wirklich auszudrücken ist, an dessen Mitteilbarkeit gezweifelt werden muß."[44] Once again, therefore, the threat of speechlessness becomes apparent, this time before the other reality. All that the language of "Dichtung" can do in these circumstances is merely to circumvent the truth as it is instinctively experienced in this new sphere: "Sie (i.e. die Sprache) umkreist immer noch einen eigenen, ursprünglich metaphysischen Bereich, der sich aber, da er keine Korrespondenz in der Außenwelt findet, verrätselt hat und nicht mehr benannt und ausgedrückt werden kann."[45]

In addition to these fundamental ideas Kesting also indicates that for many writers the new aspects of reality which they wished to reveal to the exclusion of the empirical world were identified with "Schweigen" itself, and alludes to the inevitable predicament which language must face if it has the articulation of silence as its goal.[46]

The lyric of Kaschnitz, Eich, Sachs and Celan, therefore, if taken at face value, resembles a mosaic of very different poetic styles and ideals. When, however, it is examined under the same light, it can be discovered that it evinces remarkable similarities both with regard to its poetological background as well as to the problems that befall it. In addition it can be seen that together their works illustrate facets of a wider pattern of development discerned as being inherent in modern literature as a whole. The crisis in which they find themselves concerning the relationship between language and both empirical and metaphysical reality is also to a certain extent the crisis of the "Moderne," and the resulting experiences of artistic inadequacy and even the direction towards speechlessness link them to other significant authors and poets who are representative of the age in which they write.

For all this, however, the work of these four poets would be inconceivable in its present form had they all not undergone the rigours of the Second World War, which in one way or another greatly affected their outlook on life, and the reality of the post-war years, which for them was merely a continuation of the original catastrophe. They all either tried to master this situation, criticise it or escape it. It was the major stimulus for their artistic production and either directly or indirectly it therefore led to the phenomenon of speechlessness in their poetry, a phenomenon which, it would seem, is no longer an overriding preoccupation of the younger generation of German poets.

NOTES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

[1] "Wort-Kerne und Dinge. Rilke und die Krise der Sprache. Zu den Gedichten 1906-1926," Akzente, 4 (1957), 346-358.

[2] "Sprachnot und Synthese im modernen Gedicht," Jahresring (1956/57), 348.

[3] Certain critics have taken exception to the continued discussion of the possibility that the contemporary lyric is in danger of falling silent. Johann Hoffmann-Herreros, "Mit der Sprache am Ende?" in Sprachnot und Wirklichkeitszerfall, ed. Elisabeth Meier (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1972), p. 98, for example, speaks of "das gängige Krisengeschwätz über das Schweigen" of literature, and Jean Améry, "Variationen über das Schweigen," Merkur, 24 (1970), 589, expresses his impatience with those poets who constantly theorise about the possibility of the speechlessness of their own poetry, maintaining that, if they feel they cannot speak, then they should simply fall silent: ". . . verdächtig ist die paradoxe Inflation des Schweigens durch das Medium der Sprache. Wer nicht reden kann, verstumme!"

These occasional peevish outbursts of criticism should not, however, detract from the fact that the threat of speechlessness was regarded by many poets as being a very real one and thus is worthy of serious critical attention.

[4] "Die Bedeutung Nietzsches für die Situation der modernen Literatur," DVJS, 27 (1953), 77.

[5] "Nach der Menschheitsdämmerung. Notizen zur zeitgenössischen Lyrik," Akzente, 1 (1954), 433.

[6] Das moderne Gedicht (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1959), pp. 126, 125, 130 respectively.

[7] Aspekte zeitgenössischer deutscher Lyrik (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1961), cited in later notes as Aspekte.

[8] Ibid., p. 17.

[9] R.N. Maier, Robinson. Scheitern und Neubeginn im zeitgenössischen Gedicht (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972), p. 57, hereafter referred to as Robinson, also uses the term "Suizid-Gefahr" to describe the precarious position of much of modern German poetry.

[10] *Aspekte*, p. 148.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 156.

[13] In later years Krolow, in an article entitled "Die wiedergewonnene Wahrnehmung. Das Gedicht auf der Rückkehr aus dem Schweigen," *NDH*, 12 (1965), 105, claims to have detected in the contemporary poem a reversal of the trend towards speechlessness. He writes: "Die wiedergewonnene Wahrnehmung im Gedicht, der wiedergewonnene Sinn, Wort-sinn, nach einer totalen Entsinnlichung des poetischen Textes, zeichnet sich in der Lyrik unserer Tage deutlich ab. Das mehr und mehr verstummende Gedicht kommt auf diese Art wieder zu Stimme . . . der Ansatz zur Überwindung der selbstmörderischen Lage, in der sich Poem und Poet befinden, ist jedenfalls gefunden. Das Leben des Gedichts geht weiter." He also repeats the same thesis in "Das Problem des langen und kurzen Gedichts," in Krolow, *Ein Gedicht entsteht* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 147-167. He cites as examples to prove this works of certain concrete poets such as E. Jandl, as well as those of Günter Grass, G.B. Fuchs, amongst others. Interestingly enough, he also refers to Paul Celan's *Die Niemandsrose* (1963) and the later poetry of Günter Eich. As this study will show, the tendency towards speechlessness in the poetry of the latter two writers is a continual development in their work. Krolow's assertions, "Die wiedergewonnene Wahrnehmung," 80, that the poems of *Die Niemandsrose* evince an "Umkehr vor dem Schweigen in der Rückkehr zu scheuester Kantabilität," and that Eich's poetry never becomes so abstract that it is devoid of intelligible meaning, which proves that the threat of "Verstummen" is not at all present, are therefore spurious.

[14] "Die Weisheit der unausgesprochenen Worte. Über neue Lyrik-Bände," *Merkur*, 15 (1961), 179, 188.

[15] Maier, *Robinson*, p. 11; Knörrich, *Die deutsche Lyrik der Gegenwart. 1945-1970* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1971), hereafter cited as *Die deutsche Lyrik*, p. 84; Kunisch, *Die deutsche Gegenwartsdichtung. Kräfte und Formen* (München: Nymphenburger Verlag, 1968), p. 34.

[16] *Akzente*, 12 (1965), 128-130.

[17] Höllerer also attacked the tendency towards speechlessness and silence in modern poetry in his "Nachwort" to the volume *Theorie der modernen Lyrik. Bd. 1. Dokumente zur Poetik* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965), p. 436: "Beim Anhalten und Gefrieren der Theorien in dem gegenwärtigen Bewußtseinsmoment wird ein Verhängnis sichtbar, das in einer

oft nachgesprochenen Ideologie seinen Niederschlag gefunden hat: das Schweigen, das Verstummen . . . . Daraus ergab sich ein zelebrierendes Darbieten einzelner Worte, ein Kostbarmachen von Bildern, ein Operieren mit leeren Flächen, eine sich selbst bemitleidende Tonart. Die Gedichte wurden mittellang, dann kürzer und kürzer, man beruft sich auf ostasiatische Formen, die Texte spitzen sich in Bonmots oder kehren Tiefsinn hervor, werden zu aphoristischer lyrischer Prosa, wollen Präzision und erreichen Dunkelheit, steuern den außergewöhnlichen Sonderfall an und landen in der Atmosphäre eines eingegrenzten Hofes, in dem sich die gleiche Rasse von Hühnern drängt. Das Schweigen als Theorie für eine Kunstgattung, deren Medium die Sprache ist, führt schließlich zum Wohlbehagen in Kleinstättigkeit, - also zum Gegenteil von dem, was dieses Schlüsselwort intendierte."

[18] "Sprechen und Verstummen der Dichter", in Mayer, *Das Geschehen und das Schweigen. Aspekte der Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 14. Mayer also discusses aspects of speechlessness in the contemporary German lyric in his article "Zur aktuellen literarischen Situation" in *Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart*, ed., Manfred Durzak (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971), pp. 63-75. For Ingeborg Bachmann, too, the dilemma of speechlessness was regarded as being the starting-off point for artistic production: "Wir, befaßt mit der Sprache, haben erfahren, was Sprachlosigkeit und Stummheit sind - unsere, wenn man so will, reinsten Zustände! - und sind aus dem Niemandsland wiedergekehrt mit Sprache, die wir fortsetzen werden, solang Leben unsere Fortsetzung ist." Bachmann, "Musik und Dichtung" in *Gedichte. Erzählungen. Hörspiel. Essays* (München: Piper, 1964), p. 290. Indeed, she maintained that new literary forms can only arise after writers and poets have become aware of the inadequacy of their artistic medium, namely language, and have been forced to experience the necessity of falling silent, because the undergoing of such an experience compels them to search for new forms (see "Aus den Frankfurter Vorlesungen," op. cit., pp. 298-345). Paul Celan, "Ansprache anläßlich der Entgegennahme des Literaturpreises der Freien Hansestadt Bremen," in *Paul Celan. Ausgewählte Gedichte*, ed. Beda Allemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), p. 128, also regarded the experience of artistic "Verstummen" as having been necessary for the continuation of his own poetic development: "Sie, die Sprache, blieb unverloren, ja, trotz allem. Aber sie mußte nun hindurchgehen durch ihre eigenen Antwortlosigkeiten, hindurchgehen durch furchtbares Verstummen, hindurchgehen durch die tausend Finsternisse todbringender Rede. Sie ging hindurch und gab keine Worte her für das, was geschah; aber sie ging durch dieses Geschehen. Ging hindurch und durfte wieder zutage treten, 'angereichert' von all dem."

[19] (München: List, 1969).

[20] Ibid., p. 50

[21] "Sprechen und Verstummen der Dichter", pp. 11ff.

[22] See *Formen heutiger Lyrik*, pp. 51-52, 121, 130.

[23] *Standortbestimmung als Prozeß. Eine Untersuchung zur Prosa von Marie Luise Kaschnitz* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), p. 1.

[24] E.g., Hans Bender, "Das Gedicht hat kein Alter," *Merkur*, 20 (1966), 679-683; Horst Bieneck, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," in *Handbuch der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. Herman Kunisch (München: Nymphenburg, 1965), pp. 335-337; Knörrich, *Die deutsche Lyrik*, pp. 55, 62, 125-129; Lotte Köhler, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," in *Deutsche Dichter der Gegenwart. Ihr Leben und Werk*, ed. Benno von Wiese (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1973), pp. 153-157; Grethe Merck, "Der Schriftsteller in dieser Zeit: Ingeborg Bachmann und Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Neue Sammlung*, 7 (1967), 347-358; Reiner Reiners, "Tradition und Moderne in der Lyrik von Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Schriften der Theodor Storm Gesellschaft*, 14 (1965), 40-57; Ekkehart Rudolph (ed.), *Protokoll zur Person. Autoren über sich und ihr Werk* (München: List, 1971), p. 85; Fritz Usinger, "Die Dichterin Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Deutsche Rundschau*, 84 (1958), 544-553.

[25] Graz, 1966.

[26] For example, Jauke speaks of Kaschnitz' "hervorragendes Einfühlungsvermögen" (p. 7), the "wunderbare Größe ihrer dichterischen Begabung," her "Wissen und Weisheit vom Menschlichen" (p. 72), etc., and her comments on certain of Kaschnitz' poems frequently reveal about as much critical insight as the advertising blurb on book covers, e.g., "Der Leser muß zugeben, daß in diesen drei sehr realistisch gehaltenen Versen eine geniale Kraft angezeigt wird. Es war nicht möglich, eine Atmosphäre noch besser und noch gedrängter wiederzugeben." (p. 77); "Mit einigen aneinandergereihten Worten weiß sie ihre Gefühle so trefflich und klar auszudrücken, wie sie in noch so langen Sätzen nicht besser ausgedrückt werden könnten." (p. 111).

[27] p. 114.

[28] Usinger's article "Die Dichterin Marie Luise Kaschnitz" is fundamental for an understanding of Kaschnitz' basic "Weltanschauung" and the development of her poetic themes up to the volume *Neue Gedichte* (1957). On many occasions Jauke repeats his exact words, or thinly disguised adaptations of them, throughout her dissertation, without acknowledging the source. For example: when referring to the *Gedichte zur Zeit* (1947) she writes, "Die Dichterin verkündet . . .

keinen Weltpessimismus, sondern nur die Verlorenheit einer Epoche," (p. 67); (cf. Usinger: "Dennoch verkünden diese Verse keine Verabsolutierung des Leides, keinen Welt-Pessimismus, sondern nur die Verlorenheit und Trauer einer bestimmten Epoche." p. 546); and she continues, "Auch der Wortschatz wird in den Grenzen der Tradition gehalten und es sind weder weltanschauliche oder philosophische Zutaten, noch soziologische oder politische Theorien beigefügt." (p. 70); (cf. Usinger: "Das Vokabular hält sich in den Grenzen der Tradition. Ebenso ist von der Seite der Ideologie her jede Störung des Gedichts vermieden. Es findet sich weder eine Zutat an Weltanschauung oder Philosophie noch an soziologischer oder politischer Theorie," p. 545). Jauke (on *Zukunftsmusik*, 1950)--"Marie Luise Kaschnitz versucht klarzumachen, daß sich die volle Wahrheit nur aus dem Hellen und Dunklen, aus dem Ja und Nein zusammenformen kann" (p. 81); (cf. Usinger: "Die Antwort wird nur dem, der bleibt, solange bis er das Helle und das Dunkle, das Ja und das Nein erlebt hat. Nur beides zusammen ergibt die Wahrheit." p. 549). Many other examples of such similarities between Jauke and Usinger could be quoted.

Jauke, when referring to Kaschnitz' later nature poetry also adapts, without quoting any source, Karl Krolow's thesis that in the post-war German nature poem the lyrical "Ich" tends to disappear, and nature becomes presented in a more objective, impersonal light. Krolow maintained that the first modern German nature poet to introduce this technique was Oskar Loerke. He writes: "Mit und durch Loerke entstand zum erstenmal jene neue Zeichen- und Chiffrenkunst, die mittlerweile bis zum Überdruß geübt worden ist. Die Chiffre entsteht unter anderem dadurch, daß man sich scheut, direkt zu sprechen, das heißt, sich selber deutlich 'mitzugeben'; sein Temperament, seine Miseren, seine Entzückungen . . . . Das Naturgedicht entledigte sich des einzelnen durch das Aufsuchen von Einzelheit . . . . Der ganze Katalog von Flora und Fauna stand von nun an im Gedicht zur Verfügung. Er wurde in der Naturlyrik genutzt. Man bekam durch ihn den Weg frei, um nicht mehr von sich selber sprechen zu müssen." (Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der neuen deutschen Naturlyrik," in *Aspekte*, pp. 39-41). Cf. Jauke's piecemeal echoings of this (p. 224): "Der Künstler gibt oft seiner Neigung zum indirekten Sprechen nach und gelangt schließlich zu jener Chiffrenkunst, die von Loerke zum erstenmal gepflegt wurde, heute aber bereits von allzu vielen Künstlern geübt wird. Auch in den späteren Gedichten von M.L. Kaschnitz ist sie auffallend und beruht wahrscheinlich darauf, daß sie sich scheut, etwas direkt auszusprechen, sich selbst sozusagen deutlich mitzuteilen. Anstelle eines einzigen Bildes, reiht sie deshalb mehrere ähnliche aneinander und es bleibt dem Leser überlassen, welches er sich davon auswählt. Das Detail hat dadurch an Bedeutung gewonnen. Eine Vielfalt von Flora und Fauna steht nun dem Gedicht zur Verfügung und bewirkt, daß der Dichter nicht mehr von sich selbst sprechen muß."

[29] E.g., W.H. Fritz in his review of Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme, NDH, 90 (1962), 121-122 speaks, without explaining what he means, of a "wachsende Spiritualisierung" present in this volume, and when quoting a few lines from the poem "Du sollst nicht," he writes: "Das ist außerordentlich, wissend und poetisch in einem. Zeilen wie diese öffnen den Band in seiner Tiefe. Da ist Wahrheit, mit der man leben kann. Es gibt viele Gedichte in diesem Buch, die Existenz sind . . . ." Eberhard Horst, "Strenge und Anmut: Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Neue Gedichte," NDH, 5 (1958/59), 169-170, on commenting on the volume Neue Gedichte, asserts that "Anstelle des 'schönen' Gedichts sind spröde, aufgerauhte Versgebilde getreten . . .," and that all the poems are never so abstract that they cannot be readily understood. He then, paradoxically enough, seems to retract these statements: "Diese Verse, in denen sich Klarheit und Geheimnis verflechten, sind gewiß schwer zugänglich," and, "Einige der neuen Gedichte sind von makelloser lyrischer Schönheit." Many more examples from other reviews could also be quoted in which such glib turns of phrase and vague, empty statements, instead of aiding the reader's understanding of the individual work in hand, merely serve to confuse him.

[30] Standortbestimmung als Prozeß, pp. 13-15.

[31] Knörrich, Die deutsche Lyrik, p. 127.

[32] Sternberger, "Mythendunkel und Erfahrungshelle" in Insel Almanach auf das Jahr 1971, ed. Hans Bender (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1970), p. 82.

[33] Formen heutiger Lyrik, p. 65.

[34] E.g., Susanne Müller-Hanpft, Lyrik und Rezeption. Das Beispiel Günter Eich (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1972), hereafter referred to as Lyrik und Rezeption, states that Eich's lyric soon saw itself "(preisgegeben) dem Zugriff schlechter Liebhaber und Interpreten" (p. 17). Her main criticism of the analysts of Eich's work is that they do not attempt to understand it in the context of the historical, socio-political background against which it was written, but rather in the light of the poet's sparse theoretical utterances about it, chiefly the short speech "Der Schriftsteller vor der Realität" delivered in Vézelay in 1956. The fact that this speech is quoted again and again by critics, she maintains, shows that "der Interpret, der Rezipierende, die Unsicherheit, die er mit dem künstlerischen Produkt hat, verschleiert, indem er zu verstehen vorgibt, was ihm vom Autor selbst vorgeschrieben wird" (p. 63), an attitude which raises the poet himself almost into a position of artistic infallibility. Müller-Hanpft goes on to state that, as the result of the heavy reliance by critics on the Vézelay speech as well as the influence of Gottfried Benn's conception of the

"transcendental" poet, Eich has for the most part been almost mystically revered as a "Dichter" in the most elevated sense of the word, who consistently speaks "das reine Wort." He has variously been defined as "Seher, Seismograph und Magier, der das Gefühl von vielen zur Sprache bringt; der nicht den Intellekt, das Bewußtsein, sondern die Emotion anstrengt, der Ahnung vor Wissen und Visionen vor Aufklärung stellt" (p. 88). It is, however, highly ironic that Müller-Hanpft is guilty of the same one-sided tendentiousness that she accuses others of, because she bases her own conception of Eich as being solely a political poet, as opposed to a "Seinsdichter," whose work, in the sense of Adorno, is fundamentally meant to be an expression of "Ideologieverdacht," on the statements he made in the "Rede zur Verleihung des Georg-Büchner-Preises 1959." Here, Eich stated that all modern literature must be regarded as a type of resistance against the "gelenkte Sprache" of modern society.

Paul Kersten in his article "Analyse und Heiligsprechung. Nelly Sachs und ihre Kritiker," Text und Kritik, 23 (1969), 41-46, whilst admitting that there have appeared a few creditable analyses of Sachs' poetry, laments the fact that it is not yet possible to speak of a Nelly Sachs- "Forschung" because much that has been written on her consists of "dichtungsgläubig frömmelnden Erbauungsschriften." He speaks of the "Pseudolyrismen" and "mystifizierende Mutmaßungen" with which such critics as Krolow and Ragnar Thoursies describe her poetry, and he maintains that much of the secondary literature can only be regarded "bestenfalls als Zeugnisse verklärter, paraphrasierender und philosophierender Erbauungsliteratur," written by "deutungswütigen Seelenanbeter und Interpretationspriester." (p. 44).

Already in 1962 J.K. Lyon in his dissertation "'Nature': Its Idea and Use in the Poetic Imagery of Ingeborg Bachmann, Paul Celan and Karl Krolow," (Harvard, 1962), was able to comment on the secondary literature dealing with Paul Celan thus: "Even enthusiastic critics who hail Celan have done much to compound the obscurity surrounding his poetry, and what in Celan is difficult becomes almost unintelligible in their hands. Most criticism up to 1960 deals in vagueness, generality and paraphrase without moving closer to the center of the poems" (p. 87). That this situation had not greatly improved by 1976 is, somewhat drastically, attested to by George Steiner, "A terrible Exactness," Times Literary Supplement, 3, 874 (11.6.1976), 710, who writes, "Already the academic-critical literature on Celan is disconcerting . . . most of what is written about Celan (in the form of books, articles and dissertations) is worthless."

[35] "Zur Lyrik Günter Eichs," Text und Kritik, 5 (1971), 29-31.

[36] "Günter Eich/Anlässe und Steingärten," NR, 78 (1967), 130.

[37] "Towards a Literature of Silence: the Works of Günter Eich," Dimension, 7 (1974), 36.

[38] Lyrik und Rezeption, pp. 49 and 123 respectively.

[39] Ibid., p. 202.

[40] Ibid., p. 74.

[41] Ibid., p. 154.

[42] Ibid., p. 155.

[43] "Günter Eich," in Deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart in Einzeldarstellungen, Bd. I, ed. Dietrich Weber (Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 1976), pp. 35-69.

[44] Günter Eich (München: Verlag C.H. Beck), 1976.

[45] Günter Eich (New York: Twayne, 1971), p. 160.

[46] "Günter Eichs Lyrik bis 1964," in Über Günter Eich, ed. Susanne Müller-Hanpft (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), p. 88.

[47] Die deutsche Lyrik, p. 193.

[48] "Heimweh nach der Sprache. Nelly Sachs," in Schallück, Zum Beispiel. Essays (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), p. 133.

[49] Versuch über die Lyrik von Nelly Sachs (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), p. 17.

[50] Die deutsche Lyrik, p. 134.

[51] "Zu den Gedichten von Nelly Sachs," in Das Buch der Nelly Sachs, ed. Bengt Holmqvist (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), p. 325.

[52] Ibid., p. 328.

[53] Poetik des modernen Gedichts. Zur Lyrik von Nelly Sachs (Bad Homburg, Berlin, Zürich: Gehlen Verlag, 1970), p. 144.

[54] "Hinweis auf einen Gedichtraum," in Das Buch der Nelly Sachs, pp. 291-308.

[55] Ibid., p. 302.

[56] Ibid.

[57] E.g., Bengt Holmqvist, "Die Sprache der Sehnsucht," in *Das Buch der Nelly Sachs*, pp. 14/15, 65; Paul Kersten, *Nelly Sachs* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1969), p. 18.

[58] E.g., Hellmut Geißner, "Nelly Sachs," in *Deutsche Literatur seit 1945*, ed. Dietrich Weber (Stüttgart: Kröner Verlag, 1968), p. 24; Luzia Hardegger, *Nelly Sachs und die Verwandlungen der Welt* (Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Herbert & Peter Lang, 1975), pp. 107ff. The results of Hardegger's analyses of the positive "Schweigen" in Sachs' poetry concur, to a certain extent, with my own. She does not, however, analyse in any great detail the phenomenon of "Verstummen."

[59] P. Kersten also speaks of "des vom Schweigen bedrohten dichterischen Wortes," *Nelly Sachs*, p. 28.

[60] "Die Lyrikerin Nelly Sachs", *NDH*, 17 (1970), 43.

[61] "Das Wort als konkrete Materie," in *Über Paul Celan*, ed. Dietlind Meinecke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 56.

[62] Höck, "Von welchem Gott ist die Rede?" in *Über Paul Celan*, p. 269; Prawer, "Paul Celan," in *Über Paul Celan*, p. 146.

[63] *Zur Lyrik Paul Celans* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), p. 41.

[64] Knörrich, *Die deutsche Lyrik*, pp. 54, 71; Kelletat, "Accessus zu Celans *Sprachgitter*," in *Über Paul Celan*, p. 135; Schulze, *Celan und die Mystiker. Motivtypologische und quellenkundliche Kommentare* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1976), pp. 56f; Vietta, *Sprache und Sprachreflexion in der modernen Lyrik* (Bad Homburg, Berlin, Zürich: Gehlen Verlag, 1970), pp. 99ff; W.H. Rey, "Paul Celan: Das blühende Nichts," *GQ*, 43 (1970), 750f; Stewart, "Paul Celan's modes of Silence: Some Observations on *Sprachgitter*," *MLR*, 67 (1972), 129.

[65] "Das Gedicht im Exil," in *Über Paul Celan*, p. 212.

[66] "'Landnahme-Zeit.' Geschichte und Sprachbewegung in Paul Celans *Niemandsrose*," in *Über Literatur und Geschichte. Festschrift für Gerhard Storz*, ed. Bernd Hüppauf & Dolf Sternberger (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1973), p. 348.

[67] Dischner, *Poetik des modernen Gedichts*, p. 124; Voswinckel, Paul Celan. *Verweigerte Poetisierung der Welt* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm Verlag, 1974), pp. 14, 27, 121, 122, 150, 185; Buchka, *Die Schreibweise des Schweigens. Ein Strukturvergleich romantischer und zeitgenössischer Literatur* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1974), p. 60; Janz, *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie. Zur Lyrik und Ästhetik Paul Celans* (Frankfurt am Main: Autoren- und Verlagsgesellschaft Syndikat, 1976), pp. 107f.

CHAPTER II: MARIE LUSIE KASCHNITZ

[1] Gedichte (Hamburg: Claassen & Goverts, 1947); Totentanz und Gedichte zur Zeit (Hamburg: Claassen & Goverts, 1947); Zukunftsmusik (Hamburg: Claassen, 1950); Ewige Stadt. Rom-Gedichte (Krefeld: Scherpe, 1952); Neue Gedichte (Hamburg: Claassen, 1957); Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme (Hamburg: Claassen, 1962), abbreviated in these notes to DS; Ein Wort weiter (Hamburg: Claassen, 1965), cited in these notes as EWW; Kein Zauberspruch (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1972). The short lyrical cycle Gesang vom Menschenleben which was written, according to a cursory note at the end of the volume, at the end of the 1930's, was published in 1974, the year of Kaschnitz' death. Because of the lack of more precise information as to its origin and because it adds nothing basically new to Kaschnitz' poetic themes, it was not taken into account in this study.

[2] Die Wandlung, 4 (1949), 618-623.

[3] DU, 2 (1950), 63-71.

[4] "Vom Wortschatz der Poesie," 618.

[5] Ibid., 623.

[6] Ibid., 618.

[7] Ibid., 620.

[8] Ibid., 622.

[9] "Vom Ausdruck der Zeit in der lyrischen Dichtung," 66.

[10] "Vom Wortschatz der Poesie," 622.

[11] Ibid., 621.

[12] Ibid., 623.

[13] Ibid.

[14] "Schwierigkeiten, heute die Wahrheit zu schreiben," in Kaschnitz, Zwischen Immer und Nie. Gestalten und Themen der Dichtung (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1971), p. 300, subsequently cited as Zwischen Immer und Nie.

[15] Kaschnitz, Menschen und Dinge 1945. Zwölf Essays (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1946), p. 54.

[16] "Schwierigkeiten, heute die Wahrheit zu schreiben," p. 303.

[17] *Wohin denn ich*. *Aufzeichnungen* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1963), p. 17.

[18] (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1968), p. 333, subsequently cited in these notes as *Tage, Jahre*. Kaschnitz also regarded the endeavour to create hope in a hostile world as being inherent in the works of Georg Heym, the young Gottfried Benn and Georg Trakl. She writes at some length on this topic in her essay "Georg Trakl," in *Zwischen Immer und Nie*, pp. 265-269.

[19] "Der Schriftsteller in dieser Zeit: Ingeborg Bachmann und Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Neue Sammlung*, 7 (1967), 349, hereafter referred to as "Der Schriftsteller."

[20] "Die Dichterin Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Deutsche Rundschau* 84, (1958), 544, hereafter cited as "Marie Luise Kaschnitz."

[21] Ibid.

[22] *Menschen und Dinge*, p. 19.

[23] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[24] Ibid., p. 19.

[25] E.g., "Schwüler Sommer," p. 24; "Valle di Galera," pp. 39-40; "Gewitter im Bruch," p. 75; "Hochsommer," p. 79; "Im Sturm," pp. 82-83; "Windstoß," p. 130; "Gelassene Natur," p. 160.

[26] E.g., "Bollschweil," p. 10; "Juni," p. 76; "Lob der hessischen Wälder," p. 105-107; "Der Mond," p. 111; "Der Liebende spricht," p. 112; "Wasser, ihr schönen . . . ," p. 120.

[27] *Gedichte*, pp. 64-65. Other poems from this volume which illustrate the double-sidedness of nature include, amongst others: "Tulpen," p. 21; "Holzschlag im Gründewald," p. 22; "Von der Höhe der sabinischen Gebirge," p. 37; "Im Frühling," p. 71; "Der Ruf," p. 80; "Die Wellen," p. 84; "Der Kirschbaum," p. 123; "Chemin de l'Annonciade," p. 124; "Nach dem Hochwasser," p. 138; "Rückkehr," p. 141. Kaschnitz also shows the same forces at work in her depictions of ancient southern towns and works of art, e.g., "Rom," pp. 29-30; "Herkules in der Villa Borghesa," p. 31; "Amalfi," pp. 43-44; "Delphi," p. 66.

[28] "Die Wolke," p. 149.

[29] "An die Freunde," p. 150.

[30] E.g., "Der schwarze Steg," p. 131; "Tag des Friedens," p. 169; "Die Stadt," p. 164.

[31] E.g., "Eines Tages," p. 145; "Geduld," p. 152.

[32] "1943," p. 165.

[33] "Storm der Zuversicht," p. 153.

[34] This aspect is also stressed by Otto Knörrich *Die deutsche Lyrik der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1971), p. 125. Kaschnitz' basic faith in "Humanität" and her underlying optimism have prompted critics to see her work as standing in the tradition of German Classicism whilst at the same time combining stylistic elements of the "Moderne," e.g., Horst Bieneck, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," in *Handbuch der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. Hermann Kunisch (München: Nymphenburg, 1965), p. 336; Joachim Günter, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz: Wohin denn ich," *NDH*, 96 (1963), 135; Karl Krolow, "Lyrik der Tapferkeit. Neue Gedichte von Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, June 12. 1965, "Literaturblatt," XVI; R. Reiners, "Tradition und Moderne in der Lyrik von Marie Luise Kaschnitz," *Schriften der Theodor Storm Gesellschaft*, 14 (1965), 41, hereafter referred to as "Tradition und Moderne"; Ekkehart Rudolph (ed.), *Protokoll zur Person. Autoren über sich und ihr Werk* (München: List, 1971), p. 85; F. Usinger, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," op. cit., 544; J.P. Wallmann, *Argumente. Information und Meinungen zur deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart. Aufsätze und Kritiken* (Mühlacker: Stieglitz, 1968), p. 160. Indeed, the opinion that Kaschnitz combines "Klassik" and "Moderne" is expressed so often in the secondary literature that it is in danger of becoming a trivial platitude, the validity of which, in her later works at least, is at best tenuous.

[35] G. Merck, "Der Schriftsteller," 349, presents a somewhat one-sided view of the poems of the *Gedichte* when she states that they stand "in der Nähe der Philosophie von Leibniz und dessen Glauben an die Harmonie der Welt. Gott ist der Baumeister der Welt, daher ist die Welt die Spiegelung von Gottes Weisheit, Güte und Gnade." In connection with this Knörrich, *Die deutsche Lyrik*, p. 125, also refutes R. Reiners' conclusion stated in "Tradition und Moderne," 45, that all of Kaschnitz' earlier poems "erwachsen auf dem Boden eines . . . naiven Bildungshumanismus."

[36] "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," 549.

[37] Kaschnitz describes this change in her poetic style in the passage entitled "Lyrische Zyklen," in *Engelsbrücke. Römische Betrachtungen* (Frankfurt am Main/Hamburg: Fischer, 1967), pp. 121-122.

[38] Totentanz und Gedichte zur Zeit, p. 60.

[39] Ibid., p. 66.

[40] Ibid., p. 75.

[41] Ibid., p. 61.

[42] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

[43] Ibid., p. 60.

[44] Ibid., p. 61.

[45] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

[46] Ibid., p. 61.

[47] Ibid., p. 90.

[48] Zukunftsmusik, p. 53.

[49] Ewige Stadt. Rom-Gedichte, section IV. There is no pagination in this volume, and so only the section numbers will be cited in these notes.

[50] Kaschnitz fixes the historical point of time for this cycle in an interview with Horst Bieneck: "Dieser Zyklus ist eine Auseinandersetzung, eigentlich eine Streiterei mit dem immer gleichen, eben dem ewigen Rom, nach den Erfahrungen des zweiten Weltkrieges." Bieneck, Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern (München: Hanse, 1962), p. 35, hereafter cited as Werkstattgespräche.

[51] Ewige Stadt, sections VI and XIX respectively.

[52] Ibid., section XXII.

[53] Ibid., section XXV.

[54] "Rede zur Verleihung des Georg Büchner-Preises," in Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung, Darmstadt: 1955, p. 84.

[55] Wohin denn ich, p. 65. This idea is also repeated on p. 45 of these "Aufzeichnungen," where Kaschnitz refers to the "Weltanschauung" of Nikolaus Lenau: "'bis es mir schön wird, das Schreckliche', ja, auch das fiel mir am Ende noch ein und schien mir kennzeichnend für eine Unerschrockenheit, die auch ich einmal besessen hatte, vielleicht auch für einen geheimen Wunsch, der all meinem neuen Ins-Auge-Fassen und Aufzeichnen noch immer zugrunde lag."

[56] E.g., R. Reiners, "Tradition und Moderne," 45, speaks of the "ungeheueren Wandel" which can be seen in the style of the *Neue Gedichte*; A. Baus, *Standortbestimmung als Prozeß. Eine Untersuchung zur Prosa von Marie Luise Kaschnitz* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), p. 13, hereafter referred to as *Standortbestimmung*, states: "Die Zäsur im lyrischen Werk von M.L. Kaschnitz . . . liegt nach dem thematisch bestimmten Zyklus 'Ewige Stadt' (1951) (sic) und vor der Sammlung der 'Neuen Gedichte' (1957)." S. Jauke, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz. Monographie und Versuch einer Deutung," Diss., Graz, 1966, p. 87, also remarks on the change from a more harmonious world picture in the earlier poems to a more critical view in the *Neue Gedichte*.

[57] *Engelsbrücke*, pp. 121-122.

[58] Ibid., p. 121.

[59] Ibid., pp. 121-122.

[60] Ibid., p. 122.

[61] Ibid., p. 52.

[62] Ibid., p. 26.

[63] Ibid., p. 51.

[64] *Tage, Jahre*, p. 180.

[65] *Engelsbrücke*, p. 26.

[66] *Tage, Jahre*, p. 113.

[67] *Wohin denn ich*, p. 197.

[68] *Engelsbrücke*, p. 52.

[69] E.g., Hans Bender, "Das Gedicht hat kein Alter," *Merkur*, 20 (1960), 680; S. Jauke, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz"; O. Knörrich, *Die deutsche Lyrik*, p. 127; L. Köhler, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," in *Deutsche Dichter der Gegenwart. Ihr Leben und Werk*, ed. B. von Wiese (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1973), p. 155; D. Sternberger, "Mythendunkel und Erfahrungshelle," in *Insel Almanach auf das Jahr 1971*, p. 82; Eberhard Semrau, review of *Wohin denn ich*, in *Welt und Wort*, 18 (1963), 377.

[70] *Protokoll zur Person*, p. 90.

[71] "Das Tagebuch. Gedächtnis. Zuchtrute. Kunstform," in *Zwischen Immer und Nie*, p. 263.

[72] Kaschnitz also discusses the possibility of the objectification of subjective experience in a writer's work in _Tage_, _Jahre_, pp. 225-226.

[73] _Neue Gedichte_, pp. 31-41.

[74] "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," p. 551.

[75] E.g., "Picasso in Rom," p. 61; "Vorstadt," p. 62; "Neapolitanisches Märchen," p. 64; "Piazza Vittorio," p. 65; "Torre San Lorenzo," p. 67; "Genazzano," p. 68.

[76] Contained respectively in _Dein Schweigen - meine Stimme_, p. 91 and _Ein Wort weiter_, pp. 91-99.

[77] _DS_, p. 91.

[78] _EWW_, p. 97.

[79] Ibid., p. 95.

[80] Contained respectively in _Neue Gedichte_, pp. 43-48, _DS_, pp. 9-12 and _EWW_, pp. 41-48.

[81] _Neue Gedichte_, p. 46.

[82] "Tradition und Moderne," p. 54.

[83] E.g., the second stanza: "Gekleidet in die graue Wolle der Waldrebe / Steigt der Herbst von der Höhe. / Sitzt bei den Kindern am Wiesenfeuer. / Die braten die Frösche / Die knacken die Schenkel / Die schlagen wenn der Abend graut / Aus dem wilden schwarzen Kartoffelkraut / Funken wie Sterne." _DS_, p. 9.

[84] _EWW_, p. 43.

[85] Ibid., p. 47.

[86] "Tutzinger Gedichtkreis," _Neue Gedichte_, p. 17.

[87] "Ich lebte," _DS_, p. 67.

[88] "Zoon Politikon," _EWW_, p. 65.

[89] "Schnee," _DS_, p. 74.

[90] "Weissnoch," ibid., p. 90.

[91] E.g., "Hiroshima," _Neue Gedichte_, p. 25; "Alle Gewalt," "Ich lebte," _DS_, pp. 60 and 67-78 respectively; "Zoon Politikon," _EWW_, p. 67.

[92] E.g., "Gute Nacht," *DS*, p. 63; "Zoon Politikon," *EWW*, pp. 69-70.

[93] E.g., "Ich lebte," *DS*, p. 68; "Pferd und Baum," "Landwirtschaft," *EWW*, pp. 30 and 31 respectively.

[94] E.g., "Die Kinder dieser Welt," *Neue Gedichte*, pp. 21-22; "Ich lebte," *DS*, p. 71; "Zoon Politikon," *EWW*, p. 65.

[95] E.g., "Der Leuchtturm," "Alle Gewalt," "Uralt," "Das Blaue vom Himmel," *DS*, pp. 56, 60, 61, 62 respectively.

[96] E.g., "Puppen," *EWW*, p. 20.

[97] "Zoon Politikon," *EWW*, p. 66.

[98] *DS*, p. 71.

[99] Kaschnitz discusses this theme in her essay "Liebeslyrik heute," contained in *Zwischen Immer und Nie*, pp. 221-245. The alienation of the "Ich" from the "Du" is also a prevalent motif in the poetry of Nelly Sachs and Paul Celan.

[100] "Spitalshof V," *Neue Gedichte*, p. 73.

[101] "Requiem," *DS*, p. 18.

[102] See, for example, the poems "Tageszeiten," "Breit ist die Ebene," *DS*, pp. 7 and 29 respectively.

[103] "Treib ich das Rad," *EWW*, p. 56.

[104] "Interview," *DS*, p. 57. This idea is also repeated in "Gerontologie," *EWW*, p. 37.

[105] "Tutzinger Gedichtkreis," *Neue Gedichte*, pp. 9-18.

[106] E.g., "Segesta," *Neue Gedichte*, p. 34.

[107] E.g., "Erwartung," "Liebe Sonne," *Neue Gedichte*, pp. 56 and 57 respectively; "Tageszeichen II," "Piazza Bologna," *DS*, pp. 8 and 101 respectively.

[108] E.g., "Auferstehung," *DS*, p. 13.

[109] "Castellezlandschaft," *Neue Gedichte*, p. 81; "Ein Aufhebens machen," *DS*, p. 65.

[110] E.g., "Obertöne," *Neue Gedichte*, p. 53.

[111] "Und Doch," *DS*, p. 96. Cf. also "Stadtrundfahrt VIII," *Neue Gedichte*, p. 80; "Der blaue Vorhang," "Ein Aufhebens

machen," "Nur die Augen," "Meine Neugier," DS, pp. 45, 64-66, 97, 115 respectively.

[112] EWW, pp. 45-46.

[113] Engelsbrücke, p. 151.

[114] Steht noch dahin. Neue Prosa (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1970), p. 16.

[115] Orte. Aufzeichnungen (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1973), p. 112.

[116] "Selbstverdammung der Künstler," in Engelsbrücke, pp. 169-170.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Orte, p. 75.

[119] Tage, Jahre, p. 304.

[120] Orte, p. 167.

[121] "Die verwandelte Heimat," Gedichte, p. 25.

[122] DS, p. 39.

[123] Ibid., p. 40.

[124] "Spiralen," EWW, p. 55. A similar theme is to be found in the poem "Mein Land und Ihr," EWW, p. 60, where Kaschnitz openly admits that her message has not been understood by her fellow countrymen: "Zwischen meiner Sprache und eurer / die dieselbe ist, gibt es keine Verständigung."

[125] "Demut," EWW, p. 51.

[126] EWW, p. 61. Kaschnitz offers an interpretation of this poem through the words of the main character in the short story "Der Schriftsteller," in Ferngespräche. Erzählungen (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1966), p. 148, who himself has been forced into a state of speechlessness as a result of his recognition that he lives at a time "in der die Kunst nicht mehr das Wesentliche ist und das Wesentliche nicht mehr auszudrücken vermag." He states: "Ich las . . . ein kleines Gedicht einer mir bekannten Lyrikerin, das den Titel 'Schluß' trägt . . . . In dem Gedicht fordert jemand jemanden, wahrscheinlich die Autorin selbst, auf, sich ihr 'Gedicht in den Hals zu schlagen,' also zu schweigen, und zwar um besser zu hören, was wirklich vor sich geht, nämlich das Zerriebenwerden der Menschen im Getriebe der Zeit."

[127] Neue Gedichte, p. 15.

[128] EWW, p. 67. This idea is given even more emphatic expression in Wohin denn ich, (p. 88) ". . . die Verfolgungen von gestern und die Kriege von morgen (sind) nicht nur sang- und klanglos, sondern auch trostlos, keine mystische Hochzeit mit dem Tode, ein kaltes Verstummen und Ausgelöschtwerden, dem sich selber der letzte Hahnenschrei versagt."

[129] DS, pp. 70-71.

[130] "Dann sei geübt im Traum. . . ," Gedichte, p. 129.

[131] DS, p. 106.

[132] "Stadtrundfahrt X," Neue Gedichte, p. 81.

[133] EWW, p. 59.

[134] Ibid., p. 52.

[135] Anita Baus, Standortbestimmung, p. 16, in her analysis of this poem, suggests that the missing noun here is "Wort": "Die Möglichkeit einer nachträglichen Aussage ist vorbei: 'gewesen wäre.' Intuition läßt vermuten, daß es das 'einzig richtige' Wort gibt, um etwas zu bezeichnen, aber es fällt nicht mehr ein." She also points out that the theme of poetic "Mißerfolg" is mirrored in the disintegrating syntax of the poem.

[136] Neue Gedichte, pp. 55 and 57 respectively.

[137] The use of aposiopesis in Kaschnitz' poetry is briefly mentioned by Elsbet Linpinsel, Kaschnitz Bibliographie (Hamburg: Claassen, 1971), p. 33: "Ein Verstummen im Satz oder Wort, ehe das Entscheidende gesagt ist, die 'Aposiopese' wird nur selten angewandt, nur wenn ein Verstummen sich aus Erschütterung, Demut ergeht." Its use, however, is more frequent than Linpinsel suggests. Fritz Usinger, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," p. 551 also refers to the occasional breaking off of sentences in the Neue Gedichte but leaves the reason for this rather vague. Without explaining further, he states that it is an "Ausdruck der Unvollendbarkeit unserer Erlebnisintention, unseres Gedankens, unseres künstlerischen Willens, als Ausdruck unseres Nicht-Ankommens."

[138] W. Höck, Formen heutiger Lyrik. Verse am Rande des Verstummens (München: List, 1969), p. 53 also notes the tendency towards speechlessness in this poem: "Die Verse 'Bräutigam Froschkönig' der Marie Luise Kaschnitz verstricken sich angesichts der Unfaßbarkeit des Erfahrenen zuletzt in einen stammelnden, ungelösten Satz."

[139] Neue Gedichte, p. 66.

[140] Ader writes: "Die Gemeinschaft, die im Verzicht auf das Tätigkeit, Person und Zeit setzende Verbum besteht, wird von Marie Luise Kaschnitz genützt, (i.e., in this poem), um Gegensätze und nicht korrespondierende Vorstellungen aneinanderzubinden. Dabei wird die sich anbietende Möglichkeit der Einheit schaffenden Kraft des Verbums ausgeschlagen, weil damit ein Kausalzusammenhang gestiftet würde, den die Dichterin gerade ausschließen möchte. Denn das Zusammentreffen der divergierenden Vorstellungen kann nicht rational erklärt werden, weil Dinge in Verbindung treten, die logisch nicht auf Verbindung drängen, denen der Mensch fragend gegenübersteht." "Zweigliedrige verblose Sätze in der Lyrik," WW, 17 (1967), 319.

[141] EWW, pp. 31-32.

[142] Another example, although not so striking, of this stumbling effect as a poem tries to describe the sterility of nature is to be found in the cycle "Bericht vom Neumagen": "Das bleiche Fähnlein Mais / Die toten zerfetzten Ritter / Ziehen hügelan / Und schneiden dir den Weg ab // Vor / Vorfrühling hinter der Nebenwand / Ein Auf und Ab / Von Drosseln." EWW, pp. 43-44.

[143] EWW, p. 53.

[144] This technique of directly addressing a possible reader or readers is used by Kaschnitz on at least two other occasions in EWW, viz., "Erschrick nicht. Geh leise / Wir reden im Fieber," ("Wenn alles gut geht," p. 29); "Euch nicht den Rücken gestärkt / Mit ewiger Seligkeit," ("Nicht gesagt," p. 52).

[145] EWW, pp. 73-82.

[146] Susanna Woodtli, "Marie Luise Kaschnitz," Reformatio, 16 (1967), 10, who is extremely critical of Kaschnitz' unclear religious position and the impression of what she considers to be the "forcierte Modernität" of the poetess' later lyrics, comes to a similar conclusion about these lines. She states in a derogatory tone that the word "Jen" ". . . gibt dem Vorhergehenden recht eigentlich eine Ohrfeige." She does not, however, mention the threat of speechlessness which continually occurs in this poem and which directly effects its style.

[147] Werkstattgespräche, pp. 39-40. Karl Krolow in his "Nachwort" to the volume Überallnie, a selection of Kaschnitz' poems from the Gedichte (1947) to Ein Wort weiter (1965), (München: DTV, 1969), pp. 249-250, furthers this opinion when he states: "Marie Luise Kaschnitz hat in dem, was sie schrieb, jene verfeinerte Disziplin gehabt, die zum Beispiel verhinderte, daß - zuweilen - ihre Verse vor Schreck versteinerten.

Daß sie die Sprache verloren. Niemals ist ihre Dichtung sprachlos geworden . . . Der Zerfall des Gedichts in eine wie immer geartete Fassungslosigkeit ist bei ihr nirgends zugelassen." Although it must be admitted that the state of "Verstummen" does not mark an endstage in Kaschnitz' lyric, the examples I have quoted in this section are enough to refute Krolow's remarks.

[148] *Die deutsche Lyrik*, pp. 126-127. Dolf Sternberger, "Mythendunkel und Erfahrungshelle," p. 82, without going into precise details, also sees the development towards the state of near speechlessness in Kaschnitz' poetry: "sie geht von den festen Formen und wohlgefügten Metren zu den lockeren, zerbrechenden, aufgelösten fort, vom Reimglück zu einer bitteren, trotzigen Klanglosigkeit, von der syntaktischen Klarheit ins Fragmentarische rauher Wortfügung, auch vom Tröstlichen ins Untröstliche. She bezeugt eine poetische Biographie, die an den Rand des Verstummens führt, ja zu dem Bestreben, vielmehr der Nötigung, dem Schweigen selber noch paradoxe Sprache zu verleihen oder zu entlocken."

[149] (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1972).

[150] "Einiges," *Kein Zauberspruch*, p. 84.

[151] *Kein Zauberspruch*, p. 13.

[152] *Tage, Jahre*, p. 177.

[153] E.g., "Herbst": "Den ganzen Sommer über / Hab ich Gedichte gemacht / Aus Zahlen aus / Grammatischen Regeln / Aus Füllwörtern / Fangwörtern / Für- und Widerwort / Geduldig / Im Schatten der Linden // Ich traf meinen Nachbarn / Er hatte seit zwanzig Stunden / Nicht gegessen getrunken / Er feiert das Fest Versöhnung / Was feiern wir?" (p. 112); "Vulnerable": "Noch ins Auge zu fassen das Neue / Sehbücher Sprechblasenromane Kassettenbilder / Und wie die Epoche des Wortes zu Ende geht / Verstummen die Dichter." (p. 218).

[154] *Kein Zauberspruch*, p. 52.

[155] pp. 96-97.

CHAPTER III: GÜNTER EICH

[1] Gedichte (1930); Abgelegene Gehöfte (1948); Untergrundbahn (1949); Botschaften des Regens (1955); Zu den Akten (1964); Anlässe und Steingärten (1966); Nach Seumes Papieren (1972). All these works are contained in Günter Eich. Gesammelte Werke. Bd. I Die Gedichte. Die Maulwürfe, ed. Horst Ohde & Susanne Müller-Hanpft (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), hereafter abbreviated to GW I.

[2] "Mit meinen Versen stelle ich Fragen," in Günter Eich. Gesammelte Werke. Bd. IV Vermischte Schriften, ed. Heinz F. Schafroth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), hereafter abbreviated to GW IV, p. 407.

[3] Eich amusingly admitted that he regarded himself as being a "negativer Schriftsteller" in one of his Maulwürfe, entitled "Späne," GW I, p. 317.

[4] "Der Schriftsteller vor der Realität," GW IV, p. 441.

[5] Certain commentators of Eich's poetry such as Susanne Müller-Hanpft, Lyrik und Rezeption. Das Beispiel Günter Eich (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1972), Horst Ohde, "Günter Eich," in Deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart in Einzeldarstellungen Bd. I, ed. Dietrich Weber (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1976), pp. 35-69, and Heinz F. Schafroth, Günter Eich (München: Beck, 1976) also stress the socially critical aspects of Eich's poetry but they do not explore this aspect in detail in the volumes which precede Botschaften des Regens.

[6] E.g., Müller-Hanpft, Lyrik und Rezeption, pp. 23ff.; Ohde, "Günter Eich," p. 42; Egbert Krispyn, "Günter Eichs Lyrik bis 1964," in Über Günter Eich ed. Susanne Müller-Hanpft (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), pp. 70ff., hereafter abbreviated to "Eichs Lyrik."

[7] Schafroth, Günter Eich, p. 19, also points out that much of Eich's early poetry contains "vieles vertrauter Weltschmerz."

[8] "Verse an vielen Abenden," GW I, p. 9.

[9] "Deine Tage gehen falsch," GW I, p. 10.

[10] "Verse an einen Toten," GW I, p. 15. This theme of the transitoriness of all things is also reiterated in "Verse an vielen Abenden," p. 9, and "Fragment," p. 11.

[11] "Deine Tage gehen falsch," GW I, p. 10.

[12] "Es genügte ein Tier zu sein," *GW I*, p. 9.

[13] *Günter Eich* (New York: Twayne, 1971), p. 41.

[14] These quotations are taken from the following poems respectively (page numbers refer to *GW I*): "Lazarett," p. 25; "Frühling in der goldenen Meil," p. 30; "Camp 16," p. 33; "Latrine," p. 36.

[15] See "Erwachendes Lager" p. 29, "Camp 16" p. 33.

[16] "Erwachendes Lager" p. 29.

[17] "Pfannkuchenrezept" p. 31.

[18] "Gefangener bei Nacht" p. 37.

[19] "Nacht in der Kaserne" p. 45.

[20] *GW I*, p. 30.

[21] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[22] "Wie grau es auch regnet" p. 32.

[23] "Der Nachtwind weht" p. 39.

[24] *Deutsche Lyrik der Moderne. Von Nietzsche bis Yvan Goll* (Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag, 1962), p. 350. Interestingly enough Heselhaus does not in the section of his book entitled "Günter Eichs Natur-Metaphorik" (pp. 449-454) mention Eich's use of this technique.

[25] These images are taken from the following poems respectively: "Ägyptische Plastik," p. 11; "Gedicht an die Leierkästen," p. 13; "Die Flüsse entlang," p. 14.

[26] "Der Nachtwind weht" p. 39.

[27] "Die Totentrompete" p. 41.

[28] "Frühlingsbeginn" p. 26.

[29] "Die Lärche," p. 45; "Beim Telegraphenbau," p. 47.

[30] *GW I*, p. 26.

[31] Ibid., p. 67.

[32] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[33] "Ende August," p. 76. This poem was also included in Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 102.

[34] GW I, pp. 80-81.

[35] Ibid., pp. 92-93.

[36] "Augenblick im Juni," p. 99.

[37] GW I, p. 98.

[38] Ibid., p. 77.

[39] Ibid., p. 88.

[40] Ibid., p. 70.

[41] Ibid., p. 76.

[42] Ibid., p. 90.

[43] Ibid., p. 84.

[44] Ibid., p. 96.

[45] Ibid., p. 100. Other poems from the collection Botschaften des Regens containing images of rain or water which act as mysterious portents include "Verlassene Alm," p. 84; "Westwind," p. 85; and "Es ist gesorgt," p. 92.

[46] Untergrundbahn, p. 71, repeated verbatim in Botschaften des Regens, p. 96 and in an altered, more cryptic form in Nach Seumes Papieren, GW I, pp. 174-175, under the title "Optik."

[47] Untergrundbahn, pp. 73-74; repeated in shorter form in Botschaften des Regens, p. 92, under the title "Reise."

[48] Untergrundbahn, pp. 72-73.

[49] Some critics have also noted a mood of resignation in Botschaften des Regens, but they do not analyse in detail the reasons for its occurrence. E. Krispyn, "Eichs Lyrik," pp. 87-88, for example, writes: "In einer so völlig absurden und chaotischen Welt hat aber auch die sprachliche Ordnung der Dichtung keine Gültigkeit mehr. Mit Botschaften des Regens hat Eich den Punkt erreicht, an dem die Entwicklungslinie seiner Lyrik in der absoluten Fragwürdigkeit der Weltordnung abbricht. Das Gefühl, sich totgelaufen zu haben, führt zunächst zu einer fünfjährigen Schweigezeit." H.F. Schafroth, Günter Eich, p. 57, maintains that the collection marks a definite caesura in his work.

[50] *GW I*, p. 91. Krispyn, *Günter Eich*, p. 110, interprets this poem in a completely different way. He maintains that its theme, as in other poems of *Botschaften des Regens*, is the arbitrary character and ultimate invalidity of all human categories of perception, and he goes on to state that here: ". . . even the tradition of God's act of separating the earth from the seas (Gen. 1:9, 10) is unmasked as a spurious human invention, as fish play in the forests and orchards and enter the room through the open window at which drowned seamen appear 'and ask for a light for their cheap tobacco.'" This is clearly a case of over-interpretation and is not at all uncommon in Krispyn's book.

[51] "Augenblick im Juni," *GW I*, p. 98.

[52] *GW I*, p. 97. Schafroth, *Günter Eich*, p. 57, also notes the "Geste des Abweisens, Sichverschließens," which this poem contains, but he does not discuss the reasons for its cause.

[53] *GW IV*, pp. 441-442.

[54] "Textstufen und Motivzusammenhänge. Günter Eich 'Die Häherfeder' und 'Tage mit Hähern.'" *DU*, 14 (1962), 78-79.

[55] "Auf den Spuren der Wirklichkeit. Anmerkungen zur Lyrik Günter Eichs," *Wort und Wahrheit*, 17 (1962), 382-383.

[56] *Günter Eich*, p. 56.

[57] "Tauben," *Botschaften des Regens*, *GW I*, p. 101.

[58] "Nachts," Ibid., p. 102.

[59] "Fragment," *Gedichte*, *GW I*, p. 11.

[60] "Ende August," *Untergrundbahn*, *GW I*, p. 76. Also reprinted in *Botschaften des Regens*, p. 102.

[61] "Einsicht," *Botschaften des Regens*, *GW I*, p. 98.

[62] "D-Zug München-Frankfurt," ibid., p. 92.

[63] "Wacholderschlaf," *Abgelegene Gehöfte*, *GW I*, p. 28, "Wiepersdorf, die Arminischen Gräber," ibid., p. 65.

[64] "Wacholderschlaf," pp. 28-29.

[65] "Herbstliches Meer," *Abgelegene Gehöfte*, *GW I*, p. 66.

[66] "Abgelegene Gehöfte," ibid., p. 24.

[67] "Meiner Mutter," ibid., p. 63.

[68] The phenomenon of the "Anthropomorphosierung der Natur" in Eich's poetry is also very briefly mentioned by Krispyn, "Eichs Lyrik," p. 79.

[69] "Märzmorgen," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, pp. 19-20.

[70] "Meiner Mutter," ibid., p. 63.

[71] "Regen im Gebirge," "Variationen über eine Septemberlandschaft," "Ginster," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, pp. 41, 45, 63 respectively, and "Strandgut," Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 86.

[72] See "Die Totentrompete," and "Pfaffenhut," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, pp. 41 and 44 respectively.

[73] See "Winterliche Miniatur," "Weg durch die Dünen," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, pp. 26 and 59 respectively; "Angst," Untergrundbahn, GW I, p. 71; "Ende eines Sommers," Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 79.

[74] "Ende August," Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 76. E. Krispyn also analyses the function of birds in Eich's poetry as emanations of eternity in "Günter Eich and the Birds," GQ, 37 (1964), 246-256.

[75] "Mittags um zwei," Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 94. W.K. Cook in his article "Günter Eich's Botschaften des Regens: An analysis of the collection as an artistic whole," GR, 46 (1971), 207, hereafter cited as "Eich's Botschaften des Regens," and H.F. Schafroth, Günter Eich, p. 55, both misinterpret this poem by maintaining that it is the "Pfarrer" who obtains insight into paradise. Taking the poem as a whole, however, it is clear that it is his dog who receives the revelation.

[76] "Geisenhausen," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, p. 40.

[77] "Wiepersdorf, die Arminischen Gräber," ibid., p. 65.

[78] "Die Knaben im Boot," Untergrundbahn, GW I, p. 69.

[79] "Niederschönhausen," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, p. 21.

[80] "Die Spinnenkammer," ibid., p. 42.

[81] "Die Häherfeder," ibid., p. 43.

[82] "Lesen im Gewitter," Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 100.

[83] "D-Zug München-Frankfurt" already quoted on page 116.

[84] "Grab nahe dem Fluß," Gedichte, GW I, p. 16.

[85] "Truppenübungsplatz," Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, pp. 21-22.

[86] "Winterliche Miniatur," ibid., p. 26.

[87] "Sinziger Nacht," ibid., p. 36.

[88] "Winterliche Fahrt," ibid., p. 48.

[89] "Der Anfang kühlerer Tage," Gedichte, GW I, p. 12.

[90] Certain critics maintain that the problem of gaining insight into "Wirklichkeit" through the sphere of nature is a theme which is new to Botschaften des Regens, e.g., Ohde, "Günter Eich," Otto Knörrich, Die deutsche Lyrik der Gegenwart 1945-1970 (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1971), p. 192, hereafter abbreviated to Die deutsche Lyrik. Examples already quoted, however, show that this problem was continually expressed in Eich's previous volumes of poetry also.

[91] Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 82.

[92] Ibid., p. 86.

[93] Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, p. 43. This poem was previously quoted also on p. 121.

[94] Botschaften des Regens, GW I, pp. 79-80.

[95] Ibid., p. 79. Schafroth, Günter Eich, p. 55, writes of this poem: "Das Eingangsgedicht 'Ende eines Sommers' . . . beginnt mit einem Vers der Naturverbundenheit und -bejahung: 'Wer möchte leben ohne den Trost der Bäume!' Aber es fährt fort mit: 'Wie gut, daß sie am Sterben teilhaben.' Natur ist Ausgangspunkt der paradoxen Erfahrung, daß der Trost, den sie bietet, Sterben heißt. Damit ist ihr Geheimnis keines mehr, sie ist entzaubert." However, as my analysis shows, there can be no question of an "Entzauberung" of nature in Botschaften des Regens as nature is presented here as being more mysterious and thereby even more difficult to comprehend than ever.

[96] Botschaften des Regens GW I, pp. 102-103. W.K. Cook, "Eich's Botschaften des Regens," p. 207, for reasons which are not clear, gives quite a different interpretation of this poem, stating that it is "a description of the unity between man and the non-human sphere that Eich seeks."

[97] Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, p. 56.

[98] Günter Eich, p. 56.

[99] Abgelegene Gehöfte, GW I, p. 43.

[100] GW I, pp. 77-78.

[101] "Deine Tage gehen falsch," Gedichte, GW I, p. 10. The poem "In anderen Sprachen" from Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 93, also shows how it is possible to communicate with nature through the medium of silence: "Wenn der Elsternflug mich befragte, / das Wippen der Bachstelze, / in allen Jahrhunderten vor meiner Geburt, / wenn das Stumme mich fragte, / gab mein Ohr ihm die Antwort." This wish to become as one with nature is reminiscent of that expressed in the first part of Gottfried Benn's "Gesänge I und II," first published in 1913:

O daß wir unsere Urahnen wären.
Ein Klümpchen Schleim in einem warmen Moor.
Leben und Tod, Befruchten und gebären
glitte aus unseren stummen Säften vor."

Gottfried Benn, Gesammelte Werke Bd. 3, ed. Dieter Wellershoff (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1960), p. 25.

[102] "Es genügte, ein Tier zu sein," Gedichte, GW I, p. 10.

[103] Müller-Hanpft, Lyrik und Rezeption, p. 74; Ohde, "Günter Eich," pp. 38, 39, 58.

[104] E.g., Krispyn, Günter Eich, p. 142; Ohde, "Günter Eich," p. 60.

[105] Schafroth, Günter Eich, p. 111, writes: ". . . Zu den Akten (ist), anders als jeder bisherige Lyrikband gegenüber dem vorausgehenden, eher unter dem Stichwort des Bruchs als demjenigen der Weiterentwicklung zu betrachten."

[106] Zu den Akten, GW I, p. 109.

[107] Ibid., p. 106.

[108] Ibid., p. 110.

[109] Ibid., p. 123.

[110] Ibid., p. 118.

[111] Botschaften des Regens, GW I, p. 79.

[112] Zu den Akten, GW I, pp. 122-123.

[113] Ibid., p. 104.

[114] Werke Bd. 1 - Essays. Reden. Vorträge, ed. Dieter Wellershoff (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1959), pp. 339-340.

[115] Günter Eich, p. 144. Krispyn also regards Zu den Akten as marking an end-stage in Eich's poetic activity, but his arguments are too one-sided because he only sees the more "metaphysical" side to Eich's poetry and refuses to acknowledge its political function.

[116] Zu den Akten GW I, pp. 124-145.

[117] Knörrich, Die deutsche Lyrik, p. 193.

[118] See pages 66ff. of this study.

[119] Zu den Akten GW I, p. 129.

[120] Ibid., pp. 127 and 130 respectively.

[121] See, for example, the poems "Abgelegene Gehöfte" and "Die Spinnenkammer," already quoted on pages 117 and 120 respectively of this study.

[122] Zu den Akten, GW I, p. 104. This poem is dedicated to Peter Huchel, much of whose earlier poetry, like that of Eich's, could be characterised as being "naturmagisch."

[123] Ibid., p. 115.

[124] Ibid., p. 114.

[125] Ibid., p. 125.

[126] Ibid., p. 116.

[127] See page 181 of the Nelly Sachs chapter of this study.

[128] Zu den Akten, GW I, pp. 112-113.

[129] Ibid., p. 113.

[130] "Auskünfte aus dem Nachlaß," ibid., p. 127.

[131] Ibid., p. 114.

[132] Ibid., pp. 128 and 128-129 respectively.

[133] Ibid., p. 130.

[134] Ibid., p. 116.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., p. 111.

[137] Ibid., p. 115.

[138] Ibid., p. 121.

[139] Ibid., p. 124.

[140] Reproduced in *GW IV*, pp. 443-455.

[141] Ibid., p. 452. Otto Knörrich, *Die deutsche Lyrik*, p. 191, was one of the first to emphasise the "political" intentions of the hermetic style in Eich's later poetry. He writes: "Wenn Eichs Lyrik seit den *Botschaften des Regens* immer dunkler und hermetischer wird, so erscheint das als eine notwendige Folge des politischen Selbstverständnisses dieser Lyrik als eines Gegenwurfs zur Schematisierung der Sprache in der modernen Massengesellschaft, d.h. zum Prinzip der sprachlichen Anpassung. Insofern diese letztlich Selbstpreisgabe bedeutet, ist die lyrische Hermetik Eichs eine Form der Selbstbehauptung des Menschen gegenüber den sprachlich vermittelten gesellschaftlichen Zwängen." In connection with this idea Müller-Hanpft, *Lyrik und Rezeption*, p. 138, also writes: "In der neuen Lyrik macht sich Eich unverständlich, um sein trotziges Außenseitertum als Protestgeste verstanden zu wissen."

[142] *GW IV*, p. 454.

[143] *Zu den Akten*, *GW I*, pp. 119-120. Other poems of this type include "Zitat aus Norwegen," p. 112; "Unterm Schlern," p. 120; "Schiffahrt der Gärten," p. 121; "Bankette nicht befestigt," pp. 127f.

[144] Ibid., pp. 123-124. E. Krispyn, *Günter Eich*, pp. 146, 147, 150 respectively, who completely misunderstands the intentions of the more abstract and hermetic style of Eich's later poetry because they do not fit in with his view of Eich as being exclusively an "ontological" poet says that in this poem and others like it Eich "was moving toward the creation of an autonomous universe in language." He continues with the somewhat nebulous statement: "From a seeker of truth he had turned into a demiurgic creator of his own universe out of the elemental material of language," and erroneously states that Eich's later style is to be understood as a form of "linguistic concretism."

[145] *Zu den Akten*, *GW I*, p. 113. The unpublished version (*GW I*, pp. 266-267) reads as follows: "Bleibt im Sandkasten,

Kinder! / Wer gab euch preußische Bataillone? / Ach, diese Werte, / und nur Blut kann sie retten! / Wer hilft uns? / Gut aussehende Generäle, - / (Gute Familie, / immer Offizier gewesen, / zuletzt ein Kotau vor Hitler.) / Strategische Probleme, gelöst / mit Clausewitz / und dem Gemüt eines Fleischerhakens. / Laßt von der Geistlichkeit / die Waffen segnen, / Richtbeil und Kobaltbombe! // Los, los, / steigt aus dem Sandkasten, Kinder!" According to Eich's notebook both versions were written on the same day, viz., 28.5.1963 (GW I, p. 426). Another example of a poem with a very cryptically concealed message is "Girlandenvariation über einen Abschnitt von Brehm," GW I, pp. 125-126, part of which is basically a description of how the authoritarian world, once again, as in the poem "Wildwechsel", symbolised through the image of the "Jäger," preys upon the complacency of the masses and eventually subjugates them: "Flußpferde, Flußpferde, / ihre Speise ist Lotos, / eine kleine Schar, die sich suhlt, / ihr Fell eine feine Haut, / an den Augenwinkeln gerissen. / Dahin zielen die Jäger."

[146] GW I, pp. 107-108 and pp. 131-132 respectively.

[147] "Alte Postkarten 2," ibid., p. 107.

[148] "Alte Postkarten 4," ibid., p. 107.

[149] Argumente. Informationen und Meinungen zur deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart. Aufsätze und Kritiken (Mühlacker: Stieglitz, 1968), p. 67. Müller-Hanpft, Lyrik und Rezeption, pp. 152-153, without referring to Wallmann also shows the relationship between "Fußnote zu Rom" and the "10. Formel."

[150] Müller-Hanpft, who, as has already been mentioned in the introduction to this study, regards Eich as being exclusively a political poet, states in Lyrik und Rezeption, pp. 152, 153 that his later poems ". . . führen einen Prozeß bis ans Stadium des Verstummens vor," and she is of the opinion "die Formeln sind die Endform eines lyrischen Prozeßes, der nicht mehr weiter entwickelt werden kann." Because she choses to underestimate the more "metaphysical" side of Eich's poetry, the only reason which she gives for the tendency towards speechlessness in his work was his awareness of the "Hilflosigkeit des dichterischen Wortes vor der verwalteten Welt." (Ibid., p. 154). Horst Ohde, "Günter Eich," p. 63, also regards the "Formeln" as leading to "die Schwelle des Verstummens" but he views this "Verstummen" as does also H.F. Schafroth, Günter Eich, pp. 115-116, as a gesture denoting an act of defiance against society. Both these critics do not emphasise enough the absurdity of this position, namely, that it signifies the end of poetry. Also, none of these interpreters of Eich's work adequately stresses the other

main reason for poetic failure in Eich's poetry, namely, its lack of ability to express more absolute forms of truth. Thus the reasons which they give for the tendency towards speechlessness in Eich's work are apt to be too one-sided.

[151] Zu den Akten, GW I, p. 122.

[152] Ibid., pp. 113-114. The same allusion to the German proverb "Gebranntes Kind scheut das Feuer" and the state of withdrawal from the world because of the pain it causes is also to be found in the poem "Air" from the collection Anlässe und Steingärten, GW I, p. 163: "Wenn der Winter kommt, / ritzen wir mit unseren Messern / ein Zeitwort ins Weiße. / Eine verlegene Übung, / wir wissen nicht, wie ihrs aufnehmt, / ob ihr es aufnehmen wollt / von uns Holzkindern / jenseits der Ålandsinseln, / wir brannten."

[153] Zu den Akten, GW I, pp. 118 and 129-130 respectively.

[154] Ibid., p. 122.

[155] Anlässe und Steingärten, GW I, p. 167.

[156] For example: "Pfeffers Ernte," GW I, pp. 139-140, mocks with scathing irony the over-reliance of the masses on those in authority: "die Welt geht / ohne Verwaltung zugrunde / und an ungelösten / urlogischen Problemen"; "Seminar für Hinterbliebene," GW I, pp. 163-164 is a criticism of the lack of humanity and indifference to the suffering of mankind by those who have political power: "Während die Toten / hurtig erkalten / ein langsamer Walzer / für die SPD. // . . . . // Dann kamen / senfkundige Männer, / Rübenzähler, / Abgeordnete der Wohlfahrt. // Holzauge sei wachsam! // Sie rieben uns blank / mit Schmiergelpapier, / Tatsachenberichten / und Höflichkeit." "Nachträge zu Clausewitz" and "Halali," GW I, pp. 141-142 and 160 respectively, suggest that man is a belligerent animal who callously promotes war and violence to further his aims: "Die Sonne bauernschlau / und ein Gelände / gut für Manöverschäden, / hier trifft sich die / Fünfuhrlage, / hier wird der Nachschub / von Gliedmaßen und Gedärm / besprochen, hier spitzt / der Generalstab die Lippen / zum Stiefelkuß"; "Wir wollen die Wale feiern / und die Harpune, / die den letzten trifft. // Manche waren weiß, / alle klug, / wir geben ihnen ein Fest, / mit einem Sprengsatz, / der im Körper zündet. // Wir haben den Tod nicht erfunden / aber er ist brauchbar." "Neue Postkarten 6," GW I, p. 145, revives the theme present in some of Eich's earlier poetry of the complacency of man in the face of impending disaster: "Die Katze erwartet auch hier / im Gras ihren Vogel. / Die Erdbeben hielten wir immer für eine zufallende Tür. / Die Kinder werden grau."

[157] *Anlässe und Steingärten*, *GW I*, p. 142.

[158] Ibid., p. 133. Significantly enough, this is the first poem of the collection and thus sets the tone for the whole volume.

[159] Ibid., p. 156. Mirjam is the name of Eich's daughter. Other poems from the volume which describe in one form or another the state of withdrawal from the world include "Timetable," p. 133; "Zwei," p. 157; "Verspätung," p. 166; "Formel 24," p. 168.

[160] Ibid., p. 153.

[161] *GW I*, p. 413.

[162] "Günter Eich," p. 61. Schafroth, *Günter Eich*, p. 120 also explains the title of the work thus: "'Anlässe,' das was Eichs Gedichte auslöst, sind die privaten und die gesellschaftlichen Erfahrungen und Beobachtungen eines hellhörigen, betroffenen Zeitgenossen. 'Steingärten', das meint die Endstationen der Verarbeitung dieser Erfahrungen, den Punkt, wo sie zu Meditationen geworden sind."

[163] "Weitgereist," *GW I*, p. 146.

[164] "Ziegeleien zwischen 1900 und 1910," ibid., pp. 137-139.

[165] "Rauchbier," ibid., p. 143.

[166] Ibid., p. 151.

[167] Ibid., pp. 143-145, 145-146 and 168 respectively.

[168] Ibid., pp. 166-167.

[169] E.g., Müller-Hanpft, *Lyrik und Rezeption*, p. 165; Ohde, "Günter Eich," p. 62.

[170] See pages 4 and 5 of Chapter I of this study.

[171] *GW I*, p. 153.

[172] Ibid., p. 166.

[173] Ibid., pp. 169-172.

[174] *Günter Eich*, pp. 121 and 123.

[175] "Später," *Nach Seumes Papieren*, *GW I*, p. 177.

[176] "Philologisch," ibid., p. 174.

[177] Lyrik und Rezeption, p. 187.

[178] "Kalauer," Maulwürfe, GW I, p. 305. Eich also discusses the use of humour in the later stages of his work in an interview of 28. November 1967, GW IV, p. 408: "Ich würde sagen, ich habe mich vom Ernst immer mehr zum Blödsinn hin entwickelt, ich finde also das Nichtvernünftige auf der Welt so bestimmend, daß es sich in irgendeiner Weise zum Ausdruck kommen muß. Ich kann also den tiefen Ernst, den ich früher gepflegt habe, nicht mehr verstehen und kann ihn auch nicht aushalten, vielleicht kann man das, was ich heute mache, auch Humor nennen, aber ich würde es wirklich im dadaistischen Sinne anschauen, nämlich, daß der Blödsinn eine ganz bestimmte wichtige Funktion in der Literatur hat, vielleicht auch eine Funktion des Nichteinverständnisses mit der Welt."

CHAPTER IV: NELLY SACHS

[1] Nelly Sachs' post-war lyric has been published in two volumes: a) Fahrt ins Staublose. Die Gedichte der Nelly Sachs (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1961), hereafter abbreviated to FS, which contains the collections In den Wohnungen des Todes (1946), Sternverdunkelung (1949), Und niemand weiß weiter (1957), Flucht und Verwandlung (1959) plus Fahrt ins Staublose, Noch feiert Tod das Leben and four extra poems belonging to Sternverdunkelung under the heading of "Zur Sternverdunkelung gehörig" all which appeared for the first time in this collected edition. In the body of the text, with the exception of the latter, which for practical purposes has been regarded as a part of Sternverdunkelung, these are abbreviated to WdT, StV, Nww, FlV, Fst, NfT respectively.
b) Suche nach Lebenden - Die Gedichte der Nelly Sachs (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), hereafter abbreviated to SnL, which contains the collections Glühende Rätsel I, II, III, IV (1965), Die Suchende (1965) and Teile dich Nacht (published posthumously in 1971), hereafter abbreviated to GR I, GR II, GR III, GR IV, and TdN respectively.

[2] "Gerettet fällt vieles," FlV, FS, p. 279.

[3] "Der Mensch im Kraftfeld des unsichtbaren Universums. Zu den späten Gedichten," in Nelly Sachs zu Ehren. Gedichte. Beiträge. Bibliographie (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), p. 157.

[4] Letter to Berendsohn 14.7.1946, in Berendsohn, Nelly Sachs. Einführung in das Werk der Dichterin jüdischen Schicksals (Darmstadt: Agora Verlag, 1974), p. 134, hereafter referred to as Einführung.

[5] Letter to Berendsohn 2.4.1952, ibid., p. 165.

[6] Contained in Berendsohn, Einführung, pp. 9-12.

[7] Ibid., p. 10.

[8] SnL, p. 50.

[9] FS, p. 95.

[10] Ibid., p. 111.

[11] Ibid., p. 321.

[12] Ibid., p. 76.

[13] Ibid., *Nww*, p. 221.

[14] "Chor der Geretteten," *FS*, *WdT*, p. 50: "Unsere Leiber klagen noch nach / Mit ihrer verstümmelten Musik."

[15] "Chor der Tröster," ibid., p. 65: "Gärtner sind wir, blumenlos gewordene / Kein Heilkraut läßt sich pflanzen / Von Gestern nach Morgen."

[16] "Szene aus dem Spiel Nachtwache," *FS*, p. 375.

[17] Sachs explains this relationship in a note to the "szenische Darstellung" *Beryll sieht in der Nacht*, in Sachs *Verzauberung*. *Späte szenische Dichtungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 156: "Unsere Zeit ist Sieger- und Besiegten Zeit - in neuer Form des Erlebens. Der ewige Kreislauf vom Schöpfungsaugenblick an in Natur und Menschen aus- und eingeatmet." Certain other interpreters of Sachs' poetry have also referred to the importance of the "Jäger/ Opfer" motif in her work, e.g., Gisela Dischner, "Zu den Gedichten von Nelly Sachs," in *Das Buch der Nelly Sachs*, ed. Bengt Holmqvist (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), pp. 311, 314, 320, 331 ff.; Lili Simon, "Nelly Sachs," in *Deutsche Dichter der Gegenwart. Ihr Leben und Werk*, ed. Benno von Wiese (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1973), pp. 33-45; Paul Kersten, *Die Metaphorik in der Lyrik der Nelly Sachs mit einer Wortkonkordanz und einer Nelly Sachs Bibliographie* (Hamburg: Hartmut Lüdke Verlag, 1970), p. 125.

[18] *Versuch über die Lyrik von Nelly Sachs* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), p. 26.

[19] See for example the poems "Chor der unsichtbaren Dinge" (*WdT*): "Wie werden sie (die Blicke der auseinandergerissenen Liebenden) sanft für die Ewigkeit gepflückt / Und gedeckt mit dem Schlaf / des gemordeten Kindes, / In dessen warmem Dunkel / Die Sehnsüchte neuer Herrlichkeiten keimen." (*FS*, p. 62); "Kind Kind im Orkan des Abschieds" (*FlV*): "Kind / Kind / mit der Grablegung deines Hauptes / der Träume Samenkapsel / schwer geworden / in endlicher Ergebung / bereit anderes Land zu besäen." (*FS*, p. 265).

[20] *Poetik des modernen Gedichts. Zur Lyrik von Nelly Sachs* (Bad Homburg, Berlin, Zürich: Gehlen, 1970), p. 21, hereafter referred to as *Poetik*. Dischner, in saying that Nelly Sachs' poems have the tendency to capitulate before "das Ungeheuerliche, das wahrhafte Un-sagbare," seems to be alluding to the fact that they *only* fall silent before when attempting to express the theme of the horrors perpetuated by man towards man. Dischner does not, however, discuss the

phenomenon of "Verstummen" in Sachs' poetry which arises because of its inability to express adequately the essence of another, metaphysical reality. This aspect will be discussed later in this chapter.

[21] *FS*, p. 77. Dischner's explanation appears in *Poetik*, p. 21. The second example which Dischner cites of the breaking off of a word before its completion by a dash is an error. She quotes the lines: "Heute - zwei hängende Fetzen / und Menschenhaar*e* in einer Krallenhand / die riß-" (*FS*, p. 124). In reality the text should read: "Heute - zwei hängende Fetzen / und Menschenhaar in einer Krallenhand / die riß-" She not only has misquoted the original but has also mistakenly regarded the relative pronoun "die" as qualifying "zwei hängende Fetzen und Menschenhaar(e)," instead of "Krallenhand." The use of the 3rd person singular "riß" is therefore quite grammatically correct: it is not the uncompleted form of "rissen" and therefore the syntax is complete.

[22] "A Theosophy of the Creative Word: the *Zohar* Cycle of Nelly Sachs," *GR*, 44 (1969), p. 213.

[23] *FS*, p. 152.

[24] The affinities between aspects of Sachs' thought and some of the ideas of Jewish mysticism, especially those of the Kabbalists and the followers of Chassidism, have been widely discussed to a lesser or greater extent by several other critics, e.g., Beda Allemann, "Hinweis auf einen Gedicht-Raum," in *Das Buch der Nelly Sachs*, p. 295; W. Berendsohn, *Einführung*, pp. 115-116, 165; G. Dischner, "Die Lyrik von Nelly Sachs und ihr Bezug zur Bibel, zur Kabbala und zum Chassidismus," *Text und Kritik*, 23 (1969), 25-40, hereafter referred to as *"Bezug"*; H. Geißner, "Nelly Sachs," in *Deutsche Literatur seit 1945*, ed. Dietrich Weber (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1968), pp. 15-37; H. Geißner, "Sprache der Rätsel--Rätsel der Sprache," in *Nelly Sachs zu Ehren* (1966), p. 69; B. Holmqvist, "Die Sprache der Sehnsucht," in *Das Buch der Nelly Sachs*, pp. 9, 30, 39, 50; P. Kersten, *Nelly Sachs* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1969), pp. 7, 26; Olof Lagercrantz, *Versuch über die Lyrik von Nelly Sachs* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), pp. 61, 75, hereafter cited as *Versuch*; E. Leise, "Zwischen den Welten. Skizze über den Standort von Nelly Sachs," in *Nelly Sachs zu Ehren* (1966), p. 186; J.P. Wallmann, "Deutsche Lyrik unter jüdischem Dreigestirn," *Merkur*, 20 (1966), 1191-1194; J.P. Wallmann, "Engel mit blutenden Schwingen. Zu einem Motiv in der Lyrik von Nelly Sachs," in *Nelly Sachs zu Ehren* (1966), pp. 93-105.

[25] (New York: Schocken, 1941), p. 17.

[26] Ibid., p. 18. Sachs' preoccupation with the mystical aspects of language is made most apparent in the "szenische Darstellung" *Beryll sieht in der Nacht*. In her notes to this she writes: "Das Alphabet ist das Land, wo der Geist siedelt und der heilige Name blüht," *Verzauberung*, p. 156.

[27] *FS*, p. 15.

[28] E.g., "Jakob": "O Israel, / du einmal zur Seligkeit endlich Entbundener - / des Morgentaus tröpfelnde Gnade auf deinem Haupt - // Seliger für uns, / die in Vergessenheit Verkauften, / ächzend im Treibhaus / von Tod und Auferstehung / und vom schweren Engel über uns / zu Gott verrenckt / wie du!" (*FS*, pp. 90-91); "Israel, namenloser einst": "Israel,/ erst zart, wie das Lied der Vögel / und leidender Kinder Gespräche / rinnt des lebendigen Gottes Quelle / heimatlich aus deinem Blut -" (*FS*, p. 107); "Land Israel": "Land Israel, / deine Weite, ausgemessen einst / von deinen, den Horizont übersteigenden Heiligen. / Deine Morgenluft besprochen von den Erstlingen Gottes, / deine Berge, deine Büsche / aufgegangen im Flammenatem / des furchtbar nahegerückten Geheimnisses. // Land Israel, / erwählte Sternenstätte / für den himmlischen Kuß!" (*FS*, p. 126); "Später Erstling!": "(Israel) Dein Sand wieder, / deiner Wüste Goldmaske / vor der Engelskämpfe / heruntergebogenem Himmel, / vor den flammenden Früchten / deiner *Gott* sprechenden Nacht." (*FS*, p. 200).

[29] "Lange schon fielen die Schatten," *FS*, p. 21.

[30] E.g., *WdT*--"Sandkörner wir beide, dunkel vor Abschied, und in das goldene Geheimnis der Geburten verloren, / und vielleicht schon von kommenden Sternen, Monden und Sonnen umloht." (*FS*, p. 25); "Du last und hieltest eine Muschel in der Hand. / Der Abend kam mit zarter Abschiedsrose. / Dein Zimmer wurde mit der Ewigkeit bekannt / Und die Musik begann in einer alten Dose." (*FS*, p. 36); *StV*--"Kuh und Kalb / im warmen Stall / rauchend im Abschiedsschweiß - / der goldgefaßte Schrecken / des Schöpfungsbeginns / rückwärts / wurzelnd / in ihren Augen." (*FS*, p. 182); ". . . und Abschied war ein Blatt vom Wort, // das fiel, und Seinen Namen hinterließ, / der wie ein Falke aus dem Sterben stieß -" (*FS*, p. 211); *FlV*--"Heilige Minute / erfüllt vom Abschied / vom Geliebtesten / Minute / darin das Weltall / seine unlesbaren Wurzeln schlägt . . ." (*FS*, p. 260); *GR IV*--"Wir stürtzten / in das Verlies des Abschieds / rückwärts / schattenschwarz schon / hinausgeschenkt / ins Erloschene" (*SnL*, p. 83).

[31] *FS*, p. 124.

[32] Ibid., p. 294.

[33] E.g., *WdT*--"Meerumspülte Seele, Taucherin du, bis zum Grunde. / Fische, die Engel der Tiefe, leuchten im Licht deiner Wunde." (*FS*, p. 45); *StV*--"Bis der versiegelte Himmel aufbrach / und du (Israel) . . . getroffen von der Gotteswunde / in den Abgrund aus Licht fielst -" (*FS*, p. 107); *FlV*--"So muß ich denn auferstehen / und diesen Felsen durchschmerzen / bis ich Staubgeworfene / bräutlich Verschleierte / den Seeleneingang fand / wo das immer knospende Samenkorn / die erste Wunde ins Geheimnis schlägt." (*FS*, p. 273); *NfT*--"Diese Kette von Rätseln / um den Hals der Nacht gelegt / Königswort weit fort geschrieben / unlesbar / vielleicht in Kometenfahrt / wenn die aufgerissene Wunde des Himmels / schmerzt." (*FS*, p. 385); *GR I*--"Unsere Wunden sprengen die böse Zeit . . ." (*SnL*, p. 10); *DS*--"Das Unbekannte zieht ein wo eine Wunde ist." (*SnL*, p. 102).

[34] "Die gekrümmte Linie des Leidens / nachtastend die göttlich entzündete Geometrie / des Weltalls // . . . // und das Herz der gefesselte Flüchtling / springend aus seiner Berufung: Wunde zu sein -" (*TdN*, *FS*, p. 383).

[35] E.g., *WdT*--"Immer suchtest du die Perle, am Tage deiner Geburt verloren. / Das Besessene suchtest du, Musik der Nacht in den Ohren." (*FS*, p. 45); *StV*--"Schritte der Henker / über Schritten der Opfer, // . . . // In der Musik der Sphären / wo schrillt euer Ton?" (*FS*, p. 78); "Samuel sah - / im Entscheidungsbereich / wo die Gestirne verbrennen, versinken, / David den Hirten / durcheilt von Sphärenmusik." (*FS*, p. 104); "Musik in den Ohren der Sterbenden - / Wenn die Wirbeltrommel der Erde / leise nachgewitternd auszieht." (*FS*, p. 149); *Nww*--"In einer Landschaft aus Musik / in einer Sprache nur aus Licht, / in einer Glorie / die das Blut / sich mit der Sehnsucht Zunge angezündet, / . . . / hier liegt mein Schatten, / eine Hand der Nacht," (*FS*, p. 172); "Und Metratron, der höchste aller Engel, / . . . / läßt Musik, / daran die Welten hängen, klingen, / der Liebe Inbegriff," (*FS*, p. 212); "denn Rahels Grab ist längst Musik geworden -" (*FS*, p. 233); *FlV*--"Wie viele traumumspülte Grenzen der Erde / sind auszuziehen / bis Musik kommt / von einem fremden Gestirn -" (*FS*, p. 299); "Aber / einmal fällt Stille ein / . . . / und / aus zeitverfallendem Stern / tönt Musik / nicht fürs Ohr." (*FS*, p. 304); "In der Auferstehungsasche spielte Musik." (*FS*, p. 384); *GR IV*--Die Musik / die du hörtest / war eine fremde Musik / Dein Ohr war hinausgerichtet - / . . . / Du hörtest / Neues!" (*SnL*, p. 85). Peter Sager, "Nelly Sachs. Untersuchungen zu Stil und Motivik ihrer Lyrik" (Bonn: Diss., Philosopische Fakultät, 1970), p. 147 also notes: "Der ungreifbare, unsichtbare Charakter der Transzendenzerfahrung hat in der Musik-metapher seinen sprachlichen adäquaten Ausdruck gefunden, wobei der Metapher

wiederum eine Anschaulichkeit jenseits der außersprachlichen Empirie gelingt." He also refers to the "numinose Charakter der Musik-Metapher."

[36] E.g., "So kurz ausgeliefert ist der Mensch / Wer kann da über Liebe sprechen / Das Meer hat längere Worte / auch die kristallgefächerte Erde / mit weissagendem Wuchs," GR IV, SnL, p. 89.

[37] E.g.,--"Aber zwischen Erde und Himmel / beten immer noch die gleichen Psalmen / drehen sich in den Köchern aus strahlendem Staub - / Und die Taucher mit göttlichen Grüßen / finden kein Waisenreich / in den rosenroten Wäldern der Tiefe," GR II, SnL, p. 58. I have understood the "Waisenreich" referred to here as meaning the land of the dead.

[38] SnL, p. 91.

[39] Ibid., p. 22.

[40] FS, p. 52.

[41] Quoted by Horst Bieneck, "Sprache als Verwandlung der Welt. Die Lyrikerin Nelly Sachs," in Nelly Sachs zu Ehren (1966), p. 81.

[42] "Analyse und Heiligsprechung. Nelly Sachs und ihre Kritiker," Text und Kritik, 23 (1969), 44.

[43] Certain other critics have also mentioned various similarities between Sachs' mysticism and that of Jakob Böhme, e.g., H. Geißner, "Nelly Sachs," pp. 30ff.; O. Lagercrantz, "Die Wunde zwischen Tag und Nacht," in Nelly Sachs zu Ehren (1966), pp. 47f; O. Lagercrantz, Versuch, p. 70; B. Holmqvist, "Die Sprache der Sehnsucht," pp. 10, 32f, 39. These do not, however, stress the connection between Böhme's concept of man's exile from the divine "Vaterland" and his ability to become spiritually re-united with it whilst still being physically divorced from it and Sachs' own adaptation of these ideas.

[44] "Von den drey Principien Göttliches Wesens," in Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, Bd. 2, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1960), p. 372.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] "Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi," in Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, Bd. 4, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1957), p. 151.

[48] Ibid., p. 138.

[49] Sachs' view that the fate of Israel is paradigmatic for the fate of mankind as a whole is also mentioned by: G. Dischner, "Bezug," 32; H. Geißner, "Sprache der Rätsel," 65; O. Lagercrantz, "Die fortdauernde Schöpfung," Text und Kritik, 23 (1969), 2/3; E. Leise, "Zwischen den Welten," p. 186; O. Knörrich, Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart 1945-1970 (Stuttgart: Kröner: 1971), p. 130.

[50] E.g., StV--"so wird dein namenloser Staub, den sie benannt, / dem sie soviele Wandernamen gaben / durch sie ins Gold der Ewigkeit gemünzt / doch seine selige Heimat haben." (FS, p. 81); Nww--"Mit dem Alpdruckbesen / kehrst du heimattreu / die rauschenden Meteore / vor des Paradieses Flammenpforte / hin und zurück" (FS, p. 235); FlV--"beflügelte Sehnsucht / hat ihren Schlüssel himmelwärts gedreht / Tief-Nacht-Geburt / aber schon Heimat für eines Seevogels / Ruhesturz" (FS, p. 291); "Welcher Ader zersprang um der heiligen Geometrie der Sehnsucht / in deinen Augen Heimat zu geben" (FS, p. 306); "Wie viele Heimatländer / spielen Karten in den Lüften / wenn der Flüchtling durchs Geheimnis geht" (FS, p. 313); "Unruhe flammt / Verstecke für Falter / die Heimat zu beten beginnen" (FS, p. 318); GR II--"Schließe ich die Augen / Sonnen rollen an ihrer Zeit / goldene Heimat verlassend / und doch bewohnend" (SnL, p. 47); GR IV--"Ich bin meinem Heimatrecht auf der Spur / dieser Geographie nächtlicher Länder" (SnL, p. 92); "Der hervorstürzende / Fackelzug der Ahnen / . . . / eure Heimat in meine Adern verlegt" (SnL, p. 95). Also, a frequent motif in Sachs' poems is that of "Heimweh" for the original harmony with God, e.g., FS, pp. 88, 129, 151, 173, 192, 194, 217, 229, 239, 253, 274, 288, 310, 311, 327, 331, 347, 349, 350; SnL, pp. 75, 83--as well as the possibility of an eventual "Heimkehr" to the Divine, e.g., FS, p. 192, 201, 280, 299, 372.

[51] Sachs refers to the "invisible universe" in a letter to Berendsohn dated 30.10.1957: ". . . (ich) fühle . . . mich diesem Streben, in dem es im Grunde darauf ankommt, ein geheimes unsichtbares Universum zu entdecken oder wenigstens anklopfen zu dürfen sehr verwandt. Denn es muß, wie Klee sich so schön ausdrückte, darauf ankommen, das Geheimnis sichtbar zu machen." Quoted by P. Sager, Nelly Sachs, p. 292.

[52] Jakob Böhme der schlesische Mystiker (München: Goldmann, 1959), p. 106.

[53] "Tafeln von den dreyen Principien Göttlicher Offenbarung," in Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, Bd. 9, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1956), p. 68.

[54] Verzauberung, p. 154.

[55] pp. 18-19.

[56] Ibid., p. 16.

[57] "Chor der Waisen": "In der Nacht spielen unsere Eltern Verstecken mit uns - / Hinter den schwarzen Falten der Nacht / schauen uns ihre Gesichter an, / Sprechen ihre Münder:" (FS, p. 54).

[58] E.g., "Die Kerze, die ich für dich entzündet habe, / Spricht mit der Luft der Flammensprache Beben, / Und Wasser tropft vom Auge; aus dem Grabe / Dein Staub vernehmlich ruft zum ewigen Leben." (FS, p. 23); "Du gedenkst der geistesverlorenen Worte, / Die eine Braut in die Luft hineinredete zu ihrem toten Bräutigam." (FS, p. 27).

[59] E.g., "Chor der Ungeborenen": "Ihr Liebenden, / Ihr Sehnsüchtigen, / Hört, ihr Abschiedskranken: / Wir sind es, die in euren Blicken zu leben beginnen, / In euren Händen, die suchende sind in der blauen Luft -" (FS, p. 67).

[60] FS, p. 32. Other poems in WdT which contain the theme of the mystical perception in death of the divine and eternal sphere include "Der Hausierer" (FS, p. 34), "Der Spinozaforscher" (FS, p. 36); "Chor der Toten" (FS, p. 56).

[61] E.g., "Deine Füße (O du mein Geliebter)! / Die Gedanken eilten ihnen voraus. / Die so schnell bei Gott waren, / So wurden deine Füße müde, / Wurden wund um dein Herz einzuholen" (FS, p. 26).

[62] E.g., "Chor der Geretteten": "Wir odemlos gewordene, / Deren Seele zu Ihm floh aus der Mitternacht / Lange bevor man unseren Leib rettete / In die Arche des Augenblicks." (FS, p. 51).

[63] E.g., "Chor der unsichtbaren Dinge": "O die Blicke der auseinandergerissenen Liebenden / Die Himmelschaffenden, die Weltgebärenden / Wie werden sie sanft für die Ewigkeit gepflückt / Und gedeckt mit dem Schlaf des gemordeten Kindes, / In dessen warmem Dunkel / Die Sehnsüchte neuer Herrlichkeiten keimen." (FS, p. 62).

[64] FS, p. 180.

[65] "Wenn ich nur wüßte," ibid., p. 31.

[66] "Die Kerze, die ich für dich entzündet habe," ibid., p. 23.

[67] "Nacht, mein Augentrost du," ibid., p. 24.

[68] E.g., "Chor der Steine": "Wenn einer uns hebt / Hebt er den Garten Eden empor - / Wenn einer uns hebt / Hebt er Adam und Evas Erkenntnis empor" (*FS*, p. 58).

[69] E.g., "Chor der Waisen": "Steine haben Gesichter, Vater- und Muttergesichter" (*FS*, p. 54).

[70] *FS*, p. 37.

[71] H. Geißner, "Nelly Sachs," pp. 29ff., also points out the influence of the German Romantics, especially that of Novalis, on Sachs' language mysticism.

[72] *FS*, p. 49.

[73] Ibid., p. 35.

[74] Ibid., p. 23.

[75] "Hinweis auf einen Gedicht-Raum," p. 301.

[76] *FS*, p. 339.

[77] *Fst*, *FS*, p. 64.

[78] *FS*, p. 282.

[79] Ibid., p. 364.

[80] Ibid., p. 173.

[81] Ibid., p. 345.

[82] E.g., *StV*--"Abraham": "O Du / aus dem mondversiegelten Ur, / der du im Sande der abtropfenden Sintfluthügel / die sausende Muschel / des Gottesgeheimnisses fandst -/ . . . / O du, der die Sehnsucht an den Horizont der unsichtbaren Himmel / heftete / die Engel in die Länder berief -" (*FS*, p. 88); "Moses trug, / . . . / den geöffneten Himmel / an seiner Stirn herab" (*FS*, p. 102); "David": "Samuel sah / hinter der Blindenbinde des Horizontes - / Samuel sah - / im Entscheidungsbereich / wo die Gestirne entbrennen, versinken, / David den Hirten / durcheilt von Sphärenmusik." (*FS*, p. 104); "Immer noch Mitternacht auf diesem Stern / und die Heerschaften des Schlafes. / Nur einige von den großen Verzweiflern / haben so geliebt, / daß der Nacht Granit aufsprang / vor ihres Blitzes weißschneidendem Geweih. // So Elia; wie ein Wald mit ausgerissenen Wurzeln / erhob er sich unter dem Wacholder, / schleifte, Aderlaß seines Volkes, / blutige

Sehnsuchtsstücke hinter sich her, / immer den Engelfinger / wie einen Müdigkeit ansaugenden Mondstrahl / an seine Schwere geheftet, / Untiefen heimwärtsziehend - // Und Christus! An der Inbrunstkreuz / nur geneigtes Haupt -" (FS, p. 204); FlV--"Lange / sichelte Jakob / mit seines Armes Segen / die Ähren der Jahrtausende / die in Todesschlaf hängenden nieder - / . . . / hielt Sonnen und Sterne / einen Lichtblick umarmt -" (FS, p. 290).

[83] E.g., Nww--"Abraham der Engel! / Anders gehorcht er / und im schrecklichen Befehl, / wie mit Stricken geworfen durch die Nacht. / . . . / Der Traum ist ihm gehorsam, / er durchbricht ihn - / ein Meteor der Sehnsucht - / und langt immer bei Gott an. / . . . / Im Geheimnis / nimmst du dein Tauchbad. // Deine Fußsohle ist immer an den Rand gestellt, / wo die Unsichtbarkeit zu rauschen beginnt / und die Flügel für die Außer-sich-Geratenen liegen -" (FS, pp. 202/203); the poem "Chassidim tanzen" from the same collection describes how the dance of the Chassidim causes a breaking down of the barriers of earthly existence and entrance into the other universe: "Auf / der Zunge / wird die Welt geschmeckt / abgesungen / die atmet mit der Jenseitslunge" (FS, p. 198); GR IV--the language of the "Seher von Lublin" is described as belonging to the other universe: "jedes Wort / von Mitternacht durchkreuzt / schlaflos gewendet / hörtest du es anderswo / vielleicht / wo ein Maß für Maßlosigkeit erfunden war / Liebe vom Erdenstoff befreit / die Meteorensprache / verboten einem Stern / und selber warst du außer dir / du Seher von Lublin" (SnL, p. 90).

[84] E.g., die Mütter,--StV, FS, p. 118; die Schlafenden, StV, FS, p. 147; die Sterbenden, StV, FS, p. 149; Auswanderer, Nww, FS, p. 166; Tänzerin, FlV, FS, p. 263, NfT, FS, p. 367; Flüchtling, FlV, FS, p. 313; Ausgestoßene, NfT, FS, p. 363.

[85] E.g., "Bereit sind alle Länder aufzustehen / von der Landkarte. / Abzuschütteln ihre Sternenhaut / die blauen Bündel ihrer Meere / auf dem Rücken zu knüpfen / ihre Berge mit den Feuerwurzeln / als Mützen auf die rauchenden Haare zu setzen. // Bereit das letzte Schwermutgewicht / im Koffer zu tragen, diese Schmetterlingspuppe, / auf deren Flügeln sie die Reise einmal / beenden werden" (Nww, FS, p. 186). See also FS, pp. 187, 241-242, 297, 350.

[86] Poetik, p. 140.

[87] E.g., FS: Nww, pp. 192, 230, 239; FlV, pp. 259, 260, 284, 291, 302, 311; SnL: GR I, p. 36; GR II, p. 45; GR III, p. 72, 78, 80; TdN, pp. 112, 131, amongst many others.

[88] *FS*, p. 172.

[89] "Der Steinsammler" "Du, aus Menschennächten losgebrochen / Sprichst die Lichtersprache aus den Rissen - / Die man spricht, wenn das Gehäus durchstochen / Und von dem wir nur die Funken wissen." (*FS*, p. 44).

[90] These examples are taken respectively from the poems which appear on the following pages: *FS*, pp. 138, 190, 244, 247, 308, 192, 243; *SnL*, p. 112.

[91] *Nelly Sachs*, p. 30. Luzia Hardegger, *Nelly Sachs und die Verwandlungen der Welt* (Bern, Frankfurt am Main: Herbert & Peter Lang, 1975), pp. 45ff., and pp. 61ff., also analyses in some detail this concept of "Schweigen" in Sachs' poetry.

[92] *FS*, p. 135.

[93] Ibid., p. 226.

[94] Ibid., p. 144.

[95] Ibid., p. 297.

[96] Ibid., p. 231.

[97] Ibid., p. 123.

[98] Ibid., p. 361.

[99] Ibid., p. 169.

[100] Ibid., p. 96.

[101] Ibid., p. 172.

[102] Ibid., p. 217.

[103] Ibid., p. 269.

[104] *GR I*, *SnL*, p. 37.

[105] *Versuch*, pp. 68-69.

[106] *SnL*, *GR II*, p. 55.

[107] *SnL*, *TdN*, p. 118.

[108] *SnL*, *GR I*, p. 49. The image of the poem as a "pyramid" of words which is intended as a means of mapping out the sphere of silence is also contained in an earlier poem from

the collection *Flucht und Verwandlung*: "Diese Lichterpyramide / ausgemessen in anderen Räumen / mit Begrabenen von allen Königreichen / bis ans Ende der Trauer - // Mit den Altären der Seele / die ihr Sakrament / lange schon hinter dem Augenlid verbargen" (*FS*, p. 305).

[109] *SnL*, p. 13.

[110] Ibid., p. 17.

[111] Ibid., p. 76.

[112] Ibid., p. 138.

[113] Ibid., p. 52.

[114] Ibid., *GR III*, p. 63.

[115] Ibid., p. 8.

[116] Ibid., *GR IV*, p. 88.

[117] Ibid., p. 94.

[118] *FS*, p. 323.

[119] "Hinweis auf einen Gedicht-Raum," p. 307.

[120] Dischner, *Poetik*, pp. 21-22, points out that because of the wide occurrence of "Gedankenstriche" Sachs' poems "erhalten . . . den eigentümlichen Charakter, über ihr Ende hinaus dynamisch zu wirken . . . . Das unvermittelte Abbrechen des Gedichts zeigt, wie sonst der Inhalt des Gedichts, die durchbrochene Folie des Schweigens; solches Abbrechen der gedanklichen Kommunikation läßt den Leser allein, gibt ihm nichts Sinnstiftendes 'mit auf den Weg,' an das er sich halten könnte, sondern konfrontiert ihn mit dem Schweigen." She also states that a new form of communication arises through "das Weggelassene" in the poems, occasioned by the use of aposiopesis and ellipsis.

[121] According to Dischner, *Poetik*, p. 21, the use of dashes, aposiopesis and ellipsis in Sachs' poetry, at least up to the collection *Glühende Rätsel*, is indicative of negative "Verstummen": "Der Gedankenstrich zeigt die Grenze, über die hinaus kein Sprechen mehr möglich ist; nicht vorsichtig tastet sich das Gedicht bis an die Sprachgrenze vor - in einem verzweifelten Ansturm bewegt es sich immer wieder auf sie zu und zerbricht, das heißt, endet nicht, sondern bricht unvermittelt ab." For the most part, Dischner mistakenly regards the concept of "Schweigen" in Sachs' lyric as being a negative one. In her essay "Zu den Gedichten

von Nelly Sachs," pp. 325-326, for example, she states: "Schweigen bedeutet: sprachlose Erstarrung im Tod," and speaks of the "Drohung des tödlichen Schweigens" with which Sachs' poems are confronted. In other words, Dischner equates "Schweigen" with what I have termed "Verstummen" or speechlessness, and which is, of course, a negative quality. Thus, she seems to ignore the positive meaning of the word "Schweigen" in Sachs' poetry, which characterises the "Jenseitswelt" towards which many of Sachs' poems strive and to which they attempt to give articulation. Dischner does, however, concede that the late poems open themselves up to the "Aspekt des beredten Schweigens," a point which is discussed further in note 124 below.

[122] *FS*, p. 137.

[123] Ibid., pp. 232-233.

[124] Dischner, *Poetik*, p. 144, also mentions the quality of "eloquent silence" which is discernible in Sachs' later lyric. She does not, however, stress the point that this phenomenon is not merely restricted to the late works but is present in all of Sachs' poetry: "Den Aspekt des *beredten* Schweigens eröffnen die Späten Gedichte. Die Leerstellen und Pausen des Schweigens um die Worte in den Späten Gedichten entstehen in einer produktiven Spannung zu den Worten; sie stellen nach dem äußeren Kommunikationsbruch eine neue Kommunikation mit dem Leser her, denn die werden Spiegel und Echoräume, in denen der Leser sich selbst zu erkennen gibt." The last part of this statement seems to be nebulous and speculative. As I am attempting to prove, the periods of silence contained in many of Sachs' poems are not intended to serve as "Spiegel und Echoräume" in order that the reader may "discover himself," but rather, they evoke the presence of the "Schweigen" of the "invisible universe."

[125] E.g., *GR I*: ". . . die Farbe nichts sprach mich an: / *Du bist jenseits!*" (*SnL*, p. 9); "Meine Liebe floß in dein Martyrium / durchbrach den Tod / Wir leben in der Auferstehung -" (*SnL*, p. 31); *GR III*: "In meiner Kammer / wo mein Bett steht / ein Tisch ein Stuhl / der Küchenherd / kniet das Universum wie überall / um erlöst zu werden / von der Unsichtbarkeit - / . . . / schon halte ich die Gestirne an der Wahrheit fest . . . " (*SnL*, p. 63).

[126] E.g., "Wir winden hier einen Kranz / Manche haben Donnerveilchen / ich nur einen Grashalm / voll der schweigenden Sprache / die hier die Luft blitzen läßt -" (*GR I*, *SnL*, p. 15).

[127] *Nelly Sachs*, pp. 26-27.

[128] "Nelly Sachs," p. 24.

[129] "Sprache der Rätsel," p. 73.

[130] *SnL*, p. 53.

[131] "Die Sprache der Sehnsucht," p. 33. P. Sager, "Die Lyrikerin Nelly Sachs," *NDH*, 17 (1970), 26, also notes the attitudes of confidence and scepticism present in Sachs' works: "Ohnmacht der Sprache angesichts des sprachlosen Sterbens, des mit den Toten zugleich verlorenen Alphabetes - Möglichkeit der Sprache als Teilhabe an den Verwandlungen der Welt, als Transzendenz des Todes: zwischen diesen Polen bewegt sich ihre Dichtung."

[132] *FS*, pp. 146-147.

[133] Ibid., p. 230.

[134] Ibid., p. 382.

[135] Ibid., p. 247.

[136] Ibid., p. 347.

[137] *SnL*, p. 114.

[138] *FS*, p. 272. The theme of the powerlessness of language in effecting insight into the "Jenseits" is also echoed in *FS*, p. 215 and p. 288.

[139] *FS*, p. 139.

[140] Ibid., p. 341.

[141] Ibid., p. 380.

[142] E.g., *GR II*: "Tod erschaffen so mühsam / Was den Gott verhüllt / auflösen in Sand / dieses Erstlingswort / das in die Nacht stürmt / rettungslos // Erde / Träne unter den Gestirnen - / ich sinke in deinen Überfluß -" (*SnL*, p. 48); "Wann endlich / hinter dem Ohr / in der Sterbeader / legt sich mein blickloses / Universum zur Ruhe -" (*SnL*, p. 59).

[143] *SnL*, p. 57.

[144] The image of the "Muschel" is often used in Sachs' lyric to denote an instrument for the perception of the "Jenseits," e.g., *StV*--"O du / aus dem mondversiegelten Ur, / der du im Sande der abtropfenden Sintfluthügel / die sausende Muschel / des Gottesgeheimnisses fandst -" (*FS*, p. 88);

Nww--"Und der Perlpunkt der Ewigkeit / wieder in Muscheln versteckt" (FS, p. 245); FlV--"Meer / hingekniet / singt Prophetia / in gemuscheltes Ohr" (FS, p. 324); NfT--"Wohl lauscht auch der Arzt am Herzen Ertrinkender / wie an dem abgewanderten Gesang einer Muschel / die über den Königsweg der Geheimnisse schwebt / dort - wo die Erstlinge der Landlosen wohnen -" (FS, p. 354).

[145] Formen heutiger Lyrik. Verse am Rand des Verstummens, (München: List, 1969), p. 130.

[146] SnL, p. 83. Other poems which thematically deal with the idea that defeat is necessary for success include FS, Nww, p. 240, NfT, p. 378.

[147] Die deutsche Lyrik der Gegenwart, p. 135.

[148] SnL, p. 49.

CHAPTER V: PAUL CELAN

[1] These eight volumes are *Mohn und Gedächtnis* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1952); *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1955); *Sprachgitter* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1959); *Die Niemandsrose* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1963); *Atemwende* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967); *Fadensonnen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968); *Lichtzwang* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970); *Schneepart* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1971) published posthumously and containing poems written from 16.12.1967 - 18.10.1968.

These texts have been abbreviated in the footnotes to this chapter as follows: *MuG*, *VS*, *Spg*, *NR*, *AW*, *FS*, *LZ*, *Schp*.

Two further poems of Celan's poetry have also appeared: i) *Der Sand aus den Urnen* (Wien: 1948). This was eventually recalled by Celan, ostensibly because of certain typing errors. A number of the poems therein contained were later included in *Mohn und Gedächtnis*. ii) *Zeitgehöft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976). This posthumous volume contains poems found in three folders amongst Celan's papers which were dated from February 1969 to April 13th, 1970, six days before his disappearance on April 19th, 1970. As George Steiner, "An Enclosure of Time. Paul Celan: *Zeitgehöft*," *The Times Literary Supplement*, 3908, 4th February, 1977, 132, observes: "Not only is the order of successive poems uncertain, but in a number of cases we seem to be looking at fragments which Celan might have developed or discarded. Given the character of this posthumous material, it is not certain that this Suhrkamp text, devoid as it is of any editorial guidance, will best serve Celan's interests." Owing to the tentative nature of this volume it has not been discussed in this analysis.

[2] J.K. Lyon, "'Nature': its Idea and Use in the Poetic Imagery of Ingeborg Bachmann, Paul Celan and Karl Krolow." Diss., Harvard Univ., September 1962, p. 208, hereafter referred to as "Nature."

[3] "Alle Dichter sind Juden," *GRM*, 23 (1973), 32.

[4] "Paul Celan: *Lichtzwang*," review in *Literatur und Kritik*, 6 (1971), 111.

[5] *Paul Celan* (New York: Twayne, 1973).

[6] *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie. Zur Lyrik und Ästhetik Paul Celans* (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1976).

[7] "Beyond the Chestnut Trees," Dimension 7 (1974), 324. de Beaugrande continues this idea in the same article (p. 337), stating that Celan insisted that "his poems are meant to be accepted as concrete imagery, not as codes needing deciphering. He was exasperated by attempts to reconstruct some other story or message than the textual one, and the dissertations about himself he described as 'well-meant, or sometimes not even that - but misleading. (irreführend).'"

[8] NR, p. 24.

[9] "Ansprache anläßlich der Entgegennahme des Literaturpreises der Freien Hansestadt Bremen," in Paul Celan. Ausgewählte Gedichte, ed. Beda Allemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), p. 128, hereafter referred to as the "Bremer Preisrede."

[10] Sylvio Vietta, Sprache und Sprachreflexion in der modernen Lyrik (Bad Homburg, Berlin, Zürich: Verlag Gehlen, 1970), p. 98, also stresses the dynamism of Celan's poems, their movement towards a goal. He writes: "Die Sprache Celans ist also aus ihrer Dynamik, ihrer Bewegung auf ein anderes zu und von ihm her zu verstehen. Sie ist in ihrem Wesen als 'Weg' bestimmt, keineswegs darf sie als flächiges Textgewebe oder als 'Wortmaterial' begriffen werden."

[11] "Bremer Preisrede," p. 128.

[12] The birth of language from out of the speechlessness caused by "Angst" and ensuing contact with a "Du" also forms the theme, admittedly on a much more sublime level, of Weinheber's poem "Sprachanbeginn," selected verses of which appear below:

> Im Anfang war das Schrecknis. Übermächtig
> sind Götter und Dämonen; Tat und Ding
> geheim, unsagbar. Schwer gewaltenträchtig
> ist das Geschickte, doch der Mensch gering -
>
> gering, dumpf, einsam. Namenlose Krume,
> du schweigst ihm, und ihm schweigt der schwarze Wald.
> Bis ihm aus erstem Anruf holder Blume
> der erste Name selig widerhallt.
>
> . . . .
>
> O namenreiches Glück, sich mitzuteilen!
> Du Gnade, von der Gottheit schön geschickt!
> Du runder Laut, der Urangst zu enteilen!
> Beschwörend Waches, dem der Zauber glückt.

> Du wahrstes Wunder! - Ihr halb blinden, trägen
> Gefühle, du Geschautes in und um:
> Nun laßt ihr euch vergleichen und bewegen
> und ordnen nach der Worte Mittlertum.
>
> Aus himmlischer Geburt ringt der Gedanke
> sich los und schafft die Welt zum andernmal.
> Das meisterliche Ich zerschlägt die Schranke
> und löst das Du aus seiner stummen Qual.

Sämtliche Werke, Bd. 2, Gedichte 2. Teil (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1954), pp. 420-421.

[13] "Bremer Preisrede," p. 129.

[14] Hans E. Holthusen coined this term to describe the uncertain position of the modern artist in particular and modern man as a whole in the title of his book Der unbehauste Mensch. Motive und Probleme der Literatur (München: R. Piper & Co., 1951).

[15] "Rede anläßlich der Verleihung des Georg-Büchner-Preises," in Ausgewählte Gedichte, pp. 133-148, hereafter referred to as Meridian.

[16] Peter Horst Neumann, Zur Lyrik Paul Celans (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1968), p. 77, also briefly makes reference to the fact that when Celan in Der Meridian speaks of "das Gedicht heute" he simultaneously means his own poetry as well.

[17] Meridian, p. 133.

[18] Ibid., p. 134.

[19] Ibid., p. 135.

[20] Ibid.

[21] It is Celan's concept of poetry as being a "Gegenwort" and an "Akt der Freiheit" which leads Marlies Janz, Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie, p. 187, to the conclusion that he is exclusively a political poet whose work has a social-critical mandate: "Vom sozialen Mandat seiner Kunst war Celan bis zum Schluß überzeugt." She applies Adorno's dictum, "In der Absage an den status quo konvergieren heute Engagement und Hermetik," quoted on p. 7 of her book, to Celan's poetry, insisting that the latter's inaccessibility to normal modes of understanding is to be regarded as an act of political defiance. For added support of this idea she attempts to find concrete political allusions in a great many of Celan's poems.

Whilst it may be true that the "Hermetik" of Celan's lyric as a whole evinces a basic *attitude* of defiance, a refusal to comply with the *status quo*, the number of poems which directly refers to actual political events is quite small. The famous "Todesfuge" from *Mohn und Gedächtnis* is perhaps the most obvious example. Therefore it is, I believe, misleading to stress the so-called "political" import of Celan's poetry to the detriment of its main theme, viz., the quest by an "Ich" for "das Andere" and a "Du."

Janz also ignores the fact that in *Der Meridian*, although Celan is speaking in veiled terms about his own work, he is also attempting to summarise the nature of modern poetry in general. If her theory were true, then, this would mean that Celan was of the opinion that all modern lyric is consciously political, an idea which, of course, is quite unacceptable.

[22] *Meridian*, p. 136

[23] Ibid., p. 137.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., p. 138.

[26] Ibid., p. 137.

[27] Ibid., p. 138.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., p. 139.

[30] Ibid., p. 140.

[31] Ibid., p. 141.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 142.

[34] Many critics equate "das Andere," with a numinous being, e.g., Gerhard Buhr, *Celans Poetik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1976), p. 80; Wilhelm Höck, "Von welchem Gott ist die Rede?" in *Über Paul Celan*, ed. Dietlind Meinecke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 269; Joachim Schulze, *Celan und die Mystiker* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1976), p. 20.

Janz, *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie*, pp. 122, 116, on the other hand, insists that "das Andere" is not an "Überweltliches oder Eigentliches" but is a designation for a possible "veränderte" or "menschenwürdige Realität," that is, a future socio-political reality where, in contrast to the present, justice and humanity will prevail.

Both these points of view are too specific. The term "das Andere" with Celan has various connotations, mostly having to do with vague, more absolute forms of reality.

This less specific concept of "das Andere" was also expressed by Hugo von Hofmannsthal in his "Gespräch über Gedichte" *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, Bd. II, *Prosa* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1951), p. 96, viz., "GABRIEL: 'Denn hier ist ein Herbst, und mehr als ein Herbst. Hier ist ein Winter, und mehr als ein Winter. Diese Jahreszeiten, diese Landschaften sind nichts als die Träger des *Anderen*.'"

In the "Gespräch" Hofmannsthal also describes the nature of the language necessary for articulation of "das Andere" and thus unwittingly predicts the essence of Celan's own "hermetic" language: "Niemals setzt die Poesie eine Sache für eine andere, denn es ist gerade die Poesie, welche fieberhaft bestrebt ist, die Sache selbst zu setzen, mit einer ganz anderen Energie als die stumpfe Alltagssprache, mit einer ganz anderen Zauberkraft als die schwächliche Terminologie der Wissenschaft." (Ibid., p. 99).

[35] *Meridian*, p. 142.

[36] Ibid., p. 143.

[37] Ibid., p. 141. Gerhard Buhr, *Celans Poetik*, p. 192, footnote 57, points out that the "er" here is probably a typing error and should be read as "es."

[38] *Meridian*, p. 143.

[39] Ibid.

[40] The theme of the possibility of speechlessness before new, more absolute spheres of experience often equated with silence was a prevalent one in Rilke's later poetry. The poem "Ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des Herzens," *Rainer Maria Rilke*. *Sämtliche Werke* II (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1955), p. 94, summarises most effectively the occurrence of loss of language in the face of the unknown which, according to Celan, is a main problem facing modern poetry as a whole. Rilke's poem does not only deal with this phenomenon as a theme: its last line stylistically incorporates "Verstummen" by dint of its own incompleteness.

[41] *Meridian*, p. 143.

[42] Ibid., p. 144.

[43] Ibid.

[44]"Jedes Ding, jeder Mensch ist dem Gedicht, das auf das Andere zuhält, eine Gestalt des Anderen," Meridian, p. 144. Cf. the similarity with Hofmannsthal's statement as quoted in footnote 34 above: "Diese Jahreszeiten, diese Landschaften sind nichts als die Träger des Anderen."

[45]Meridian, p. 144.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid. Celan's notion expressed both in the "Bremer Preisrede" and in Der Meridian that the modern poem addresses itself to a "Du" and that the subject matter of a good number of his poems deals with encounters by an "Ich" with a "Du" has led certain critics to believe that his poetry has great affinities with Martin Buber's "Ich" / "Du" mysticism.

The most comprehensive article on this subject is "Paul Celan and Martin Buber: Poetry as Dialogue" by J.K. Lyon, PMLA, 86 (1971), 110-120. This comparison, however, is a dangerous one because unlike Buber Celan can in no way be considered exclusively a religious philosopher. Lyon himself is forced to admit that there are certain major discrepancies between Celan's and Buber's thought.

For an explanation of what Celan means by the "Ich - Du" relationship with reference to poetry one need only turn to Wolfgang Kayser's Das sprachliche Kunstwerk. Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft (Bern & München: Francke Verlag, 1969, 14th ed.). In the section entitled "Haltungen und Formen des Lyrischen" Kayser delineates what he regards to be three "lyrische Grundhaltungen"--"die einzigen, die es gibt und in der Sprache leben kann. Alle lyrische Dichtung, die je gedichtet worden ist, lebt innerhalb der drei Haltungen, aus diesen drei Haltungen." (p. 339).

The first of these "Haltungen" he calls "Lyrisches Nennen" in which "das Ich steht einem 'Es,' einem Seienden gegenüber, erfaßt und sagt es." (p. 339).

In the second, which he calls "Lyrisches Ansprechen," "bleiben seelische und gegenständliche Sphäre nicht getrennt gegenüber, sondern wirken aufeinander, entfalten sich in der Begegnung, die Gegenständlichkeit wird zum 'Du.' Das lyrische Kundgeben vollzieht sich in der Erregtheit dieses gegenseitigen Ergreifens." (p. 339).

In the third "Grundhaltung," called "Liedhaftes Sprechen," "gibt es keine gegenüberstehende und auf das Ich wirkende Gegenständlichkeit mehr, hier verschmelzen beide völlig miteinander, hier ist alles Innerlichkeit. Die lyrische Kundgabe ist die einfache Selbstaussprache der gestimmten Innerlichkeit oder inneren Gestimmtheit." (p. 339).

From this, therefore, it would seem that Celan is of the opinion that that which Kayser calls "Lyrisches Ansprechen" is the "Grundhaltung" predominant in modern poetry. Celan's concept of an "ansprechbares Du" and the poem's task of effecting a "Begegnung" with it bears a striking resemblance to Kayser's theory, not just in content but also in the terminology used to describe it.

The probable reason why Celan considers this "Grundhaltung" to be prevalent in modern lyric is the need of the poet to put an end to his isolation from the world around him and make contact with a credible reality. The third "Grundhaltung" would then be his ultimate goal.

[49] Meridian, p. 141.

[50] Ibid., p. 145.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., p. 146.

[54] (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956). In his analysis of the major trends inherent in the modern lyric Friedrich stresses the fact that around the middle of the 19th century poetry tended to move away not only from traditional literary norms but also from the historical reality in which it was created. It saw its aim as being the revelation of a new absolute reality which stands in contrast to the imperfection of the man-made world. (pp. 20, 23, 31, 165).

With such poets as Rimbaud and Mallarmé he points out that the new reality which their poems endeavoured to express was so vague and ethereal in nature that it could only be called "das unbestimmte 'Andere'" or "das Nichts." (p. 47). As has been seen Celan, too, uses the term "das Andere" and also implies that the sphere which the modern poem has as its task to explore is itself "das Nichts" when he states that "Dichtung" is "Toposforschung" of an elusive "U-topie," literally "no-place." As will be shown in the course of this study, "das Andere" and "das Nichts" are often synonymous in Celan's own poetry.

Friedrich also refers to the "Dunkelheit" of modern poetry, which comes about as a result of its endeavour to mirror as precisely as possible the mystical, barely intelligible essence of the new reality. With regard to this he quotes, for example, Diderot: "Dichter seid dunkel" (p. 26), and St. John Perse: "Die Dunkelheit, die man dem Dichter vorwirft, entstammt eben der Nacht, die sie erforscht: die Dunkelheit der Seele und des Mysteriums, worin das menschliche Wesen eingetaucht ist." (p. 178).

Finally, Friedrich emphasises the modern poet's fundamental awareness of the inaccessibility of the goal towards which his poetry strives. (pp. 184, 201).

The above ideas are now regarded as being quite standard in a literary-historical sense. Gerhard Buhr, *Celans Poetik*, has managed, however, in his almost word by word analysis of *Der Meridian*, to totally obscure them beneath a welter of abstract thought, and thus his exposition becomes far more difficult to understand than the original text itself. Janz, *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie*, p. 228, is with justification severely critical of the abstruseness and unreadability of Buhr's work.

[55] E.g., "Dein Haar überm Meer," "In Ägypten," "Espenbaum," "Todesfuge," *MuG*, pp. 44, 15, 37-39 respectively.

[56] *MuG*, p. 22.

[57] *MuG*, p. 43. The image of the "Gehöft" here as being a mysterious region of the imagination, into which the poetic mind must ascend, is also to be found in Rilke's "Ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des Herzens":

> Ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des Herzens. Siehe, wie klein dort,
> siehe: die letzte Ortschaft der Worte, und höher,
> aber wie klein auch, noch ein letztes
> Gehöft von Gefühl. Erkennst du's?
> Ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des Herzens.

Sämtliche Werke, II (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1955), p. 94.

[58] *MuG*, p. 27.

[59] *MuG*, p. 23.

[60] Sylvio Vietta, *Sprache und Sprachreflexion*, p. 89, in agreement with Harald Weinrich, "Linguistische Bemerkungen zur modernen Lyrik," *Akzente*, 15 (1968), 39, maintains that statements concerning the nature and function of poetry do not occur in *Mohn und Gedächtnis*. Examples cited in this analysis, however, show that "metapoetry" is present in Celan's first volume to a greater extent than the "in symbolische Sprache gehüllter Reflexionsspuren" which Vietta detects there.

[61] Jean Firges, in his article "Sprache und Sein in der Dichtung Paul Celans," *Muttersprache*, 72 (1962), 266, also quotes "Der Reisekamerad" and refers to the importance of Celan's memory of his mother for his poetry: "das Wort, das der Dichter spricht, steht unter der Vormundschaft der toten Mutter. Sie ist sein Vormund. Mit anderen Worten, der Dichter spricht nicht aus eigener Ermächtigung, sondern immer nur kraft des Abgeschiedenen, des Toten, des Vergessenen, kraft dessen, was vor ihm gewesen ist und was ihm als Totenerbe zukommt." It must be mentioned, however, that whilst Firges' statement holds true for much of Celan's earliest poetry, the later works are not so reliant on the mother figure for their impetus.

[62] *MuG*, p. 64. Judith Ryan, "Monologische Lyrik. Paul Celans Antwort auf Gottfried Benn," *Basis. Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur*, 2 (1971) 272, using different examples, also comes to the conclusion that Celan's many plant metaphors symbolically represent the poem itself and its upward growth towards light: "wie eine Pflanze, so wächst auch das Gedicht Wort für Wort dem 'Licht' zu."

[63] In the first part of his "Sonette an Orpheus" (Sonnet No. VII), *Sämtliche Werke I* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1955), p. 735, Rilke also compares the poet to a vintner: "Rühmen, das ists! Ein zum Rühmen Bestellter, / ging er hervor wie das Erz aus des Steins / Schweigen. Sein Herz, O vergängliche Kelter / eines den Menschen unendlichen Weins. // Nie versagt ihm die Stimme am Staube, / wenn ihn das göttliche Spiel ergreift. / Alles wird Weinberg, alles wird Traube, / in seinem fühlenden Süden gereift."

[64] *VS*, p. 64.

[65] *VS*, p. 59.

[66] *Sprache und Sprachreflexion*, p. 91.

[67] Celan's concept of poetry as a means of progressing towards light and truth bears a remarkable resemblance to the inner structure of the lyric of Jorge Guillén as it is described by Hugo Friedrich, *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik*, p. 188. Friedrich states that Guillén's poetry is "weniger Aussage über das Sein selber--das würde sie als Lyrik unmöglich machen. Vielmehr ist sie Bewegung: Bewegung zum Sein hin, Bewegung aus dem Verworrenen in die Helle, aus der Unruhe in die Ruhe. Licht, als die makellose Erscheinung des Seins, ist ihr Gipfelwert; die lichthaltigsten Gedichte sind auch die formal genauesten. 'Immer ist Licht', heißt ein Vers. Aber das eigentliche Ereignis dieser Dichtung ist die Lichtwerdung, die 'Wonne des Übergangs'. Ihre lyrische Energie entspringt der Gespanntheit auf ein 'Darüber hinaus.'"

[68] *MuG*, p. 49.

[69] E.g., *MuG*, pp. 9, 10, 33; *VS*, p. 42.

[70] *MuG*, p. 75.

[71] *VS*, p. 11.

[72] *VS*, p. 34.

[73] *VS*, p. 35.

[74] Celan echoed this idea in the Meridian speech in a passage already quoted in part in the first section of this chapter, where he outlines the poem's function as a "Gespräch": "Erst im Raum dieses Gesprächs konstituiert sich das Angesprochene, versammelt es sich um das es ansprechende und nennende Ich. Aber in diese Gegenwart bringt das Angesprochene und durch Nennung gleichsam zum Du Gewordene auch sein Anderssein mit. Noch im Hier und Jetzt des Gedichts - das Gedicht selbst hat ja immer nur diese eine, einmalige, punktuelle Gegenwart - noch in dieser Unmittelbarkeit und Nähe läßt es das ihm, dem Anderen, Eigenste mitsprechen: dessen Zeit." (pp. 144-145).

[75] MuG, p. 74.

[76] MuG, p. 75.

[77] VS, p. 15.

[78] MuG, p. 68. J.K. Lyon, "Nature," p. 105, also points out that the images of the mouth, lips and tongue "are variously used in Celan's poetry as symbols of communication and speech."

[79] "Zähle die Mandeln," MuG, p. 76, and "Wo Eis ist," VS, p. 20.

[80] VS, p. 43.

[81] Lyon also describes in his dissertation, "Nature," and in a later article, "The Poetry of Paul Celan: An Approach," GR, 39 (1964), 50-67, hereafter cited as "Approach," how these nature images are used to describe the cerebral landscapes in Celan's earlier poetry.

[82] VS, p. 42.

[83] Other poems of this type which best illustrate how the "Ich" actively makes contact with the "Du" or vice versa include "Die Hand voller Stunden," MuG, p. 12; "Das Schwere," VS, p. 14; "Gut," VS, p. 24; "Fernen," VS, p. 19.

[84] "Erinnerung an Frankreich," MuG, p. 24.

[85] MuG, p. 55.

[86] The theme of silence, "Schweigen," is a widely discussed aspect of Celan's poetry, although often it is not thoroughly explained with detailed reference to actual texts. The reader is referred to page 19 of the introduction of this study and the accompanying footnote No. 64 for a list of some of those critics who mention "Schweigen" in Celan's works.

[87] *MuG*, p. 31.

[88] *MuG*, p. 68.

[89] Hermann Burger, *Paul Celan. Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Sprache* (Zürich, München: Artemis, 1974), p. 85, points out that the "Krücke" is a cipher for language with Celan.

[90] *VS*, p. 64.

[91] "Leuchten," *VS*, p. 11.

[92] *MuG*, p. 70. A similar image of an enigmatic silent female is contained in "Chanson einer Dame im Schatten," *MuG*, pp. 25-26, where she is called "Die Schweigsame."
It is of interest to note that T.S. Eliot's "Ash Wednesday" (1930) also makes reference to a mysterious "Lady of silences" and "The silent sister veiled in white and blue / Between the yews," who exists in a realm of forgetfulness, silence and death. *T.S. Eliot. The complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971), pp. 60-67.
Whether or not Celan's idea of a silent lady is a conscious adaptation of Eliot's figure cannot be proven for certain. Nevertheless, "Ash Wednesday" contains images such as the ones mentioned above as well as "Rose of Memory, Rose of forgetfulness," "Speech without word and word of no speech," the "blind eye," and the notion of entering a dream world, which bear a striking resemblance to important motifs in Celan's poetry.

[93] *MuG*, p. 76.

[94] *VS*, p. 24.

[95] *MuG*, p. 53.

[96] *MuG*, p. 48.

[97] "Corona," *MuG*, p. 33.

[98] "Stille!", *MuG*, p. 73.

[99] "Wo Eis ist," *VS*, p. 20.

[100] "Aus Herzen und Hirnen," *MuG*, p. 68. Other poems which portray most vividly the union between the "Ich" and the "Du" in silence include "Auf hoher See," *MuG*, p. 52, and "Der Tauben weißeste," *MuG*, p. 69.

[101] Using far fewer examples to illustrate this point, Vietta, *Sprache und Sprachreflexion*, p. 99 also comes to the same

conclusion, although he does not stress the silence of the "Du," nor does he detect the motif of "Schweigen" in Mohn und Gedächtnis. He writes: "Celans Sprache ist wesentlich durch ihren Bezug zu einem 'Anderen' bestimmt. . . . Für dieses 'Andere', das 'Unheimliche', zu dem das Gedicht unterwegs ist und aus dem es kommt, wird nun im Band 'Von Schwelle zu Schwelle' schon das Wort Schweigen: genauer 'das Verschwiegene' gebraucht."

[102] VS, p. 41.

[103] Certain other commentators have noted that "Schnee" is a symbol for "Schweigen" with Celan, e.g., P.H. Neumann, Zur Lyrik Paul Celans, p. 73; M. Züfle, "Die Frage nach Gott. Interpretationen später Gedichte Paul Celans," Hochland, 63 (1971), 452; E. Kostal, "Paul Celan zwischen Nihilismus und metaphysischer Spekulation," Literatur und Kritik, 6 (1971), 452; J.K. Lyon, "Nature," pp. 135, 200.

[104] VS, p. 36.

[105] VS, p. 41.

[106] VS, p. 49.

[107] MuG, p. 71.

[108] VS, p. 52. Commenting on the second stanza quoted here, C. Stewart, "Paul Celan's Modes of Silence: Some Observations on Sprachgitter," MLR, 67 (1972), 129 writes: "'Baum', in Celan's poetry tends, roughly speaking, to connote the colour of the living (most usually 'braunes Haar' suggests the living person as opposed to the 'weißes Haar' of the dead), so that 'was braun schien' appears as something living which words, in the manner of some parasitic undergrowth, have all but choked."

[109] VS, p. 40.

[110] VS, p. 9.

[111] VS, pp. 60-61.

[112] VS, p. 16.

[113] VS, p. 62.

[114] P.H. Neumann, Zur Lyrik Paul Celans, p. 26, also points out that the language of Celan's poetry attempts to emulate the word "nach dem Bilde des Schweigens." This it does, he maintains, through the creation of new word formations which are totally alien to "Normalsprache."

[115] In this poem Celan may well be echoing Kafka and Hofmannsthal. In a letter dated 27th January 1904 Kafka wrote: "ein Buch muß eine Axt sein für das gefrorene Meer in uns." (Quoted by Wolfgang Schemme, "Die Sprache zwischen Versagen und Aussagen," WW, 19 (1969), 123). Celan's imagery is quite similar, as it conveys the idea that poetic language is a kind of axe which clears the way for perception of the silent realm of the dead, which is at the same time the mental "Innenraum" of "das Andere."

Richard Brinkmann, "Hofmannsthal und die Sprache," DVJS, 35 (1961), 76, observes that Hofmannsthal makes reference to what he calls "der Prunk der Worte." Celan alters this drastically because, whereas Hofmannsthal is alluding to his erstwhile confidence in language, Celan speaks of the "Bettel der Worte," and the "Prunk des Verschwiegenen," and thus is praising the merits of silence as opposed to words.

[116] VS, p. 38.

[117] This process of inner perception is reminiscent of the corpses in Rilke's poem "Morgue," Sämtliche Werke I (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1955), p. 503, the last two lines of which read: "Die Augen haben hinter ihren Lidern / sich umgewandt und schauen jetzt hinein."

[118] Spg, p. 28.

[119] J.K. Lyon, "Nature," pp. 101-102, also comes to the same conclusion. He notes that the image of the "Eye" is a very frequent one in Celan's early poetry and states that it represents "the central organ of poetic creativity."

[120] Die Elegie bei Paul Celan (Bern, München: Francke, 1969), p. 41.

[121] "Die Frage nach Gott. Interpretationen später Gedichte Paul Celans," Hochland, 63 (1971), 460.

[122] "Linguistische Bemerkungen zur modernen Lyrik," 39.

[123] Spg, p. 17.

[124] Spg, p. 32.

[125] "Stimmen," Spg, p. 9. The communication with silent voices from "das Andere" is also described in the first stanza of the poem "Die Silbe Schmerz" from Die Niemandsrose, p. 78: "Es gab sich Dir in die Hand: / ein Du, todlos, / an dem alles Ich zu sich kam. Es führen / wortfreie Stimmen rings, Leerformen, alles / ging in sie ein, gemischt / und entmischt / und wieder / gemischt."

[126] "Windgerecht," *Spg*, p. 30.

[127] "Ein Tag und noch einer," *Spg*, p. 39.

[128] *Spg*, p. 17.

[129] *Spg*, p. 19.

[130] *Spg*, p. 40. The theme of not vocalising insights into the realm of silence is also to be found in a poem by Nelly Sachs already quoted on p. 216 of this study: "Geheimnis an der Grenze des Todes / 'Lege den Finger an den Mund: / Schweigen Schweigen Schweigen'-" "Glühende Rätsel III," *Suche nach Lebenden*, p. 78.

[131] *Spg*, p. 25.

[132] Viz., "Zähle die Mandeln," already quoted: "Dort erst tratest du ganz in den Namen, der dein ist, / schrittest du sicheren Fußes zu dir, / schwangen die Hämmer frei im Glockenstuhl deines Schweigens," *MuG*, p. 76; and "Heute und Morgen," "Durchpocht / von schweigsam geschwungenen Hämmern / die Stelle, / wo mich das Flügelaug streifte." *Spg*, p. 18.

[133] *Spg*, p. 25.

[134] *Spg*, p. 53.

[135] *Spg*, p. 38.

[136] *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, p. 143, and previously quoted on p. 251 of this chapter.

[137] *Spg*, p. 34. This progression towards "das Andere" and successful insight is also described with similar imagery in a section of the poem "Es ist alles anders" from *Die Niemandsrose*, pp. 82-83: "Windmühlen // stoßen dir Luft in die Lunge, du ruderst / durch die Kanäle, Lagunen und Grachten, / bei Wortschein, / am Heck kein Warum, am Bug kein Wohin, ein Widderhorn hebt dich // *Tekiah*! - wie ein Posaunenschall über die Nächte hinweg in den Tag."

[138] *Spg*, p. 42. The theme of successful insight into "das Andere" and union with the "Du" in the pauses which occur between words is also contained in the poem "Kolon" from *Die Niemandsrose*, p. 63, quoted in part here: "Doch du, Erschlafene, immer / sprachwahr in jeder / der Pausen: / für / wieviel Vonsammengeschiedenes / rüstest du's wieder zur Fahrt: / das Bett: Gedächtnis! // Fühlst du, wir liegen / weiß von Tausend- / farbenem, Tausend- / mündigem vor / Zeitwind, Hauchjahr, Herz-Nie."

[139] Other poems of this type include "Windgerecht," Spg, p. 30, and "Unter ein Bild," Spg, p. 15. Vietta, Sprache und Sprachreflexion, pp. 103ff., also sees in the poem "Schneebett," Spg, p. 29, an example of what he calls the "Dynamik des Absturzes" towards "das Andere" and a brief pause denoting temporary "Verstummen."

[140] Spg, pp. 32-33.

[141] E.g., "Gold, das die Nacht in die Hände mir zählt," MuG, p. 67; "Es gab sich Dir in die Hand: ein Du, todlos," NR, p. 78; "Da lieg ich und rede zu dir / mit abgehäutetem Finger," NR, p. 46; "An niemand geschmiegt mit der Wange - an dich, Leben. / An dich, mit dem Handstumpf / gefundnes. // Ihr Finger. / Fern, unterwegs, / an den Kreuzungen, manchmal," NR, p. 43; "Vom Anblick der Amseln, abends, / durchs Unvergitterte, das / mich umringt, // versprach ich mir Waffen. - // Vom Anblick der Waffen - Hände, / vom Anblick der Hände - die längst / vom flachen, scharfen / Kiesel geschriebene Zeile // . . . . // die Zeile, die Zeile, / die wir umschlungen durchschwimmen, / zweimal in jedem Jahrtausend," AW, p. 90.

J.K. Lyon, "Approach," p. 62, also notes that the image of the "hand" nearly always "symbolizes in some manner the specific act of poetic creation."

[142] Spg, p. 44.

[143] Spg, p. 54.

[144] E.g., "Ein Körnchen Sands," VS, p. 15: "du kannst warten, / bis unter allen den Augen ein Sandkorn dir aufglimmt, / ein Körnchen Sands, / das mir träumen half, / als ich niedertaucht, dich zu finden -"

[145] Rabbi Löw in "Einem, der vor der Tür stand," NR, p. 40 and Mandelstamm in "Nachmittag mit Zirkus und Zitadelle" NR, p. 59 and "Es ist alles anders", NR, p. 82.

[146] E.g., "Les Globes," NR, p. 72, conjures up a vision of the Jewish dead in the sphere of "das Andere"--. . . Die / Geschlechterkette, / die hier bestattet liegt und die hier noch hängt, in Äther, / Abgründe säumend." "Hüttenfenster," NR, p. 76 shows how the "poetic eye" envisages amongst other things the displaced Jews of the East--"Das Aug, dunkel: / als Hüttenfenster. Es sammelt, / was Welt war, Welt bleibt: den Wander - / Osten, die / Schwebenden, die / Menschen-und-Juden, / das Volk-vom-Gewölk, magnetisch / ziehts, mit Herzfingern, an / dir, Erde." This poem also makes reference to Vitebsk in White Russia. "La Contrescarpe," NR, pp. 80-81, describes Celan's own flight from the East: "Über Krakau / bist du gekommen, am Anhalter / Bahnhof floß deinen Blicken ein Rauch zu, / der war schon von morgen, Unter /

Paulownien / sahst du die Messer stehn, wieder, / scharf von Entfernung."

[147] E.g., "Bei Wein und Verlorenheit," NR, p. 11, to be discussed presently.

[148] NR, p. 10. It seems quite possible that Celan first "read" about the idea of "das Wort vom Zur-Tiefe-Gehn" in a letter of Rilke's dated 20th February, 1920. A passage from this expresses Rilke's own desire to articulate the mystical sphere of silence and contains similar imagery to that of Celan's poem: "Ach wie oft wünscht man nicht, ein paar Grade tiefer zu reden. . . . aber man gelangt nur um eine minimale Schicht hinab, man bleibt im Ahnen, wie sich dort reden ließe, wo das Schweigen ist." Quoted by J.W. Storch, "Wortkerne und Dinge. Rilke und die Krise der Sprache," Akzente, 4 (1957), 353.

[149] NR, p. 15.

[150] Ibid.

[151] "Chymisch," NR, p. 25.

[152] "Es ist nicht mehr," NR, p. 36.

[153] NR, p. 11.

[154] NR, pp. 12-13. Interestingly enough, this poem is dedicated to Nelly Sachs and describes the doubts both she and Celan had concerning the nature of God.

[155] The comparison between Celan's own esoteric language and "Gewieher" is also to be found in the second stanza of "Hammerköpfiges," FS, p. 51, which describes perception and communion with the "Du": "Silbriges: Hufsprüche, Schlaflied- / gewieher - Traum- / hürde und -wehr-: niemand / soll weiter, nichts." The same image is also present in "Die rückwärts gesprochenen Namen," LZ, p. 86, and in "Gewieherte Tumbagebete," FS, p. 51.

[156] NR, pp. 54-55.

[157] "Gesang und Magie im Zeitalter des Steins. Zur Dichtung Ingeborg Bachmanns und Paul Celans," Merkur, 17 (1963), 192.

[158] "Ein Wurfholz," NR, p. 56.

[159] "Les Globes," NR, p. 72.

[160] "Erratisch," *NR*, p. 33.

[161] "Heute," *AW*, p. 43.

[162] "Singbarer Rest," *AW*, p. 32.

[163] "Hammerköpfiges," *AW*, p. 54.

[164] "Unter die Haut," *AW*, p. 45.

[165] "Am weissen Gebetriemen," *AW*, p. 40.

[166] "Es ist alles anders," *NR*, p. 83.

[167] "Ein Dröhnen," *AW*, p. 85.

[168] "Erblinde," *AW*, p. 41.

[169] *NR*, p. 67.

[170] "Zwölf Jahre," *NR*, p. 18.

[171] "Das aufwärtsstehende Land," *AW*, p. 66.

[172] "Huhebiblu," *NR*, pp. 73-74.

[173] *NR*, p. 79. P.H. Neumann, *Zur Lyrik Paul Celans*, p. 23, also refers to the stumbling effect contained in such poems. He writes: "Je mehr in Celans Dichtung die Sprache ihrer Grenzen innewird, um so öfter spricht sie, da ihr anders zu sprechen nicht möglich zu sein scheint, stammelnd."

[174] *NR*, p. 14.

[175] *NR*, p. 22. Klaus Voswinckel, *Paul Celan. Verweigerte Poetisierung der Welt* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm Verlag, 1974), p. 61, expresses a similar opinion concerning Celan's use of a poetic form in this poem which is more suitable for a "Kinderlied": "Durch den Rückgriff auf fremde, zitierbare Formen wird der Sprachlosigkeit hier einmal - scheinbar erleichtert - drei Strophen lang ein freier Atem verliehen." Voswinckel does not, however, discuss the reasons for this "Sprachlosigkeit," nor does he explain the phenomenon in all its aspects.

[176] *Spg*. p. 32

[177] "Weggebeizt," *AW*, p. 27.

[178] *AW*, p. 35.

[179] P.H. Neumann, *Zur Lyrik Paul Celans*, p. 74, also points out that: "Im Dreischritt der Wortreduktion vollzieht dieses Gedicht die Mimesis seines Verstummens."

[180] "Glühende Rätsel III," in *Suche nach Lebenden*, p. 53, already referred to on pages 221-222 of this study.

[181] "Paul Celan: das blühende Nichts," *GQ*, 43 (1970), 754.

[182] *NR*, p. 26.

[183] *NR*, p. 22

[184] *FS*, p. 40. Celan first mentioned that his poetry resembles a "Flaschenpost" in the "Bremer Preisrede," *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, p. 128: "Das Gedicht kann, da es ja eine Erscheinungsform der Sprache und damit seinem Wesen nach dialogisch ist, eine Flaschenpost sein, aufgegeben in dem - gewiß nicht immer hoffnungsstarken - Glauben, sie könnte irgendwo und irgendwann an Land gespült werden, an Herzland vielleicht." In a poem from *Fadensonnen* on page 35, the notion is expressed in highly cryptic form that also "das Andere" can send out missives which can then be intuitively interpreted and understood: "Ewigkeiten, über dich / hinweggestorben, / ein Brief berührt / deine noch un- / verletzten Finger, / die erglänzende Stirn / turnt herbei / und bettet sich in / Gerüche, Geräusche."

[185] *LZ*, p. 7. Voswinckel, *Verweigerte Poetisierung*, p. 208 also refers to the poetological import of these images.

[186] *FS*, p. 18.

[187] *FS*, p. 11.

[188] *FS*, p. 22

[189] *FS*, p. 31.

[190] *FS*, p. 58.

[191] *FS*, p. 100.

[192] *LZ*, p. 81.

[193] *Schp*, p. 63.

[194] *FS*, p. 77.

[195] *FS*, p. 92.

[196] "Unter der Flut," *LZ*, p. 89.

[197] "das verschollene Ziel," FS, p. 84; "das schwimmende Ziel," FS, p. 37.

[198] FS, p. 35; LZ, p. 57; Schp, p. 13.

[199] FS, p. 26.

[200] FS, p. 32.

[201] LZ, p. 76.

[202] E.g., "Der Eisenstachel, gebäumt, / in der Ziegelsteinnische: / das Nebenjahrtausend / fremdet sich ein, unbezwingbar, / folgt / deinen fahrenden Augen" ("Lyon, Les Archers" FS, p. 24); "langsam, blutunterwaschen / konfiguriert sich / das selten verheißne / rechte / Neben- / leben." ("Das Wildherz," LZ, p. 53).

[203] LZ, p. 81.

[204] FS, pp. 26, 38; LZ, p. 84; FS, p. 91 respectively.

[205] FS, p. 15.

[206] Joachim Schulze, Celan und die Mystiker (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1976), p. 50, points out that the word "Ziw" is the light of the "Shekhinah," which, according to cabbalistic tradition, is the manifestation of God's presence on earth.

[207] Schp, p. 72.

[208] Schp, p. 32. It is quite possible that Celan is sardonically echoing Ingeborg Bachmann here, who, in one of her "Frankfurter Vorlesungen" makes a call for the re-animation and participation of poetry in modern life. She refers to Simone Weil's dictum "Das Volk braucht Poesie wie das Brot," and continues: "Poesie wie Brot? Dieses Brot müßte zwischen den Zähnen knirschen und den Hunger wiedererwecken, ehe es ihn stillt." Ingeborg Bachmann. Gedichte. Erzählungen. Hörspiel. Essays (München: Piper, 1964), p. 311. From the tone of Celan's poem, of course, this "bread," far from stimulating the appetite, seems to have deadened it.

[209] "Mein Werk ist eine Sackgasse," quoted and translated by Hugo Friedrich, Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik, p. 118.

[210] Verweigerte Poetisierung, pp. 211-212.

[211] FS, p. 51.

[212] It is likely that the poem "Wenn ich nicht weiss, nicht weiss," *FS*, p. 48, also contains a cryptic reference to Celan's mockery of his own poetry about nothing. It ends with the following scenario: "und wenn er, // er, // foetal, // karpatisches Nichtnicht beharft, // dann spitzenklöppelt die // Allemande // das sich übergebende unsterbliche // Lied." Czernowitz in Rumania, Celan's birthplace, lies in the Carpathian Mountains.

[213] *Schp*, p. 31.

[214] *FS*, p. 75.

[215] *Schp*, p. 57.

[216] *Schp*, p. 29.

[217] *FS*, p. 79.

[218] *FS*, p. 16.

[219] *FS*, p. 114.

[220] *LZ*, p. 64.

[221] *LZ*, p. 63.

[222] *Schp*, p. 18.

[223] *FS*, p. 85.

[224] *FS*, p. 21.

[225] *Schp*, p. 75.

[226] *FS*, p. 112.

[227] *Schp*, p. 19.

[228] *LZ*, p. 12.

[229] *Schp*, p. 60.

[230] *FS*, p. 23.

[231] *FS*, p. 38.

[232] *FS*, p. 41.

[233] *FS*, p. 67.

[234] *LZ*, p. 87.

[235] *FS*, p. 86.

[236] *Schp*, p. 89.

[237] *LZ*, p. 61.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

[1] Quoted in *Über die Sprache*. *Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse deutscher Dichter und Schriftsteller des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Karlheinz Daniels (Bremen: Carl Schünemann Verlag, 1966), p. 33, hereafter cited as *Über die Sprache*.

[2] Quoted by R.N. Maier, *Paradies der Weltlosigkeit*. *Untersuchungen zur abstrakten Dichtung seit 1909* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1964), p. 112.

[3] See p. 28 of this study.

[4] "James Joyces Epiphanie und die Überwindung der empirischen Welt in der modernen deutschen Prosa," *DVJS*, 35 (1961), 594.

[5] For a representative cross-section of books and articles dealing with the crisis of language in literature the reader is referred to the fifth section of the bibliography at the end of this study, "Background Material."

[6] "Der moderne Dichter und das arme Wort," *GRM*, 7 (1957), 144f.

[7] (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1972).

[8] (München: Paul List Verlag, 1969).

[9] *Formen heutiger Lyrik*, p. 66.

[10] The incidence of "Sprachnot" in German Expressionism is also mentioned by Ziolkowski, "James Joyces Epiphanie," 595, who in addition makes reference to Fritz Martini's treatment of this topic in *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, 9. Auflage (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1958), pp. 540ff., and Theodor Pelster, "Das Motiv der Sprachnot in der modernen Lyrik," *DU*, 22 (1970), 39.

[11] *James Joyce und die Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp. 23, 25.

[12] *Language and Silence*. *Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 51, hereafter referred to as *Language and Silence*.

[13] Ibid., p. 103.

[14] *Über die Sprache*, p. 587.

[15] Ibid.

[16] This poem from the collection *Ein Wort weiter* is analysed on p. 70 of this study.

[17] Quoted by Daniels, *Über die Sprache*, p. 596.

[18] Quoted by Hans Weigel, *Karl Kraus oder die Macht der Ohnmacht* (München: DTV, 1972), p. 335. Kraus' decision to fall silent is also referred to by Heinz Politzer, *Das Schweigen der Sirenen. Studien zur deutschen und österreichischen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968), p. 38.

[19] Analysed on pp. 86ff. of this study.

[20] *Language and Silence*, p. 12.

[21] *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language. A critical and historical Study* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 16.

[22] A comprehensive treatment of the relationship between language and silence in medieval German philosophy with particular reference to Meister Eckehart is contained in Josef Quint, "Mystik und Sprache. Ihr Verhältnis zueinander insbesondere in der spekulativen Mystik Meister Eckeharts," *DVJS*, 27 (1957), 48-76.

[23] The following texts are useful for an understanding of the positive concept of "Schweigen" in the work of these philosophers: Ewald Wasmuth, "Das Schweigen Ludwig Wittgensteins. Über das 'Mystische' im Tractatus Logico-philosophicus," *Wort und Wahrheit*, 7 (1952), 815-822; Werner Manheim, *Martin Buber* (New York: Twayne, 1974); Max Picard, *Die Welt des Schweigens* (Erlenbach-Zürich: Eugen Rentsch Verlag, 1948); W.H. Rey, *Poesie der Antipoesie. Moderne deutsche Lyrik* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm Verlag, 1978), p. 58.

[24] "Der moderne Dichter und das arme Wort," 132.

[25] "Ich schrieb das Schweigen, die Nächte, ich zeichnete das Unaussprechliche auf." Bd. 1 (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965), p. 72.

[26] *Struktur der modernen Lyrik von der Mitte des neunzehnten bis zur Mitte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (3. Auflage der erweiterten Neuausgabe, Hamburg: Rowohlt 1956), pp. 98, 111, 117, 118, 130, 158. A comprehensive treatment of Mallarmé's concept of silence is also to be found in

"Mallarmé: The Transcendence of Language and the Aesthetics of the Book," in G.L. Bruns, *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language*, pp. 101-137.

[27] *Das Schweigen der Sirenen*, p. 396.

[28] "Die Sageweisen der modernen Lyrik," *DU*, 3 (1953), 45f.

[29] *Animals of Silence. Essays on Art, Nature and Folktale* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 60.

[30] "Robert Musils Törless und die Krise der Sprache," *Sprachkunst - Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft*, 4 (1973), 91-99.

[31] *Über die Sprache*, pp. 366f., 54, 75f., 604 and 597 respectively.

[32] *Im Widerspiel des Unmöglichen mit dem Möglichen. Zum Problem der Sprache bei Ingeborg Bachmann* (Zürich: Juris Druck und Verlag, 1971).

[33] In *The Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Geroux, 1969), pp. 2-34.

[34] (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[35] In *Literature as System. Essays toward the Theory of Literary History* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 221-279.

[36] "Der moderne Dichter und das arme Wort," 142.

[37] "Mystik und Sprache," 53.

[38] *GRM*, 3 (1966), 225-243.

[39] Günther, "Über absolute Poesie. Zur geistigen Struktur neuerer Dichtung," in *Form und Sinn* (Berlin: Francke, 1968), p. 235; Storck, "Wort-Kerne und Dinge. Rilke und die Krise der Sprache. Zu den Gedichten 1906-1926," *Akzente*, 4 (1957), 346-358.

[40] *Von Benn zu Enzensberger. Eine Einführung in die zeitgenössische deutsche Lyrik* (Nürnberg: Verlag Hans Karl, 1971), p. 82.

[41] (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer 1965).

[42] Ibid., p. 84.

[43] Ibid., p. 86.

[44] Ibid., p. 87.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., p. 103.

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